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From the Editor

We have a snide saying in the United States: Those who can, do; those who can't, teach. It's nonsense, of course, probably made up by someone who wasn't a good student.

I'd like, however, to offer a variation of that saying: Those who can, do; those who can't, destroy. People who believe they must burn down the world so a version that suits their ideals can rise in its place aren't actually going to create, build, or nurture anything. More than 100 years ago, anarchists ran around blowing people up so a government-free paradise could magically emerge. Left-wing terrorism tore cars, children, and neighborhoods apart in the 1960s and 1970s, with the aim to replace bourgeois capitalist values with benevolent socialist ones. Now religious extremists in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe are trying yet again to use violence to usher in a fantastical paradise that will exist nowhere but in their own fevered dreams. Destruction is quick and easy. Three-year-olds are really good at it. Creating and planning, building and nurturing take patience, knowledge, skill, time, and a lot of hard work. The people who devote themselves to death and destruction aren't going to build paradise, now or ever. They don't have what it takes. Because they can't do, they destroy.

Fortunately, the rest of the world is still full of creativity. We are pleased to begin this issue with a photo essay by veteran photojournalist Robert Nickelsberg. He presents black-and-white and color portraits of people we would otherwise never see: Afghan women who have lost their husbands to violence and who now struggle to survive and raise their children in a country that makes no place for them. The struggle to foster peace and rebuild communities in Afghanistan can seem endless. One of the most important and difficult tasks in the fight against the Taliban has been to build up indigenous security and police forces that can operate effectively in cooperation with a nascent legal system. Major Birger Soerensen describes how one Danish task force accomplished this work despite both predictable obstacles and unexpected diversions.

Following this, Lieutenant Colonel Sylvester Perera, who wrote about his experience fighting the Tamil Tiger insurgency in Sri Lanka for the November 2015 issue of *CTX*, returns with a thoughtful look at the Sri Lankan army's role in the process of rebuilding infrastructure, livelihoods, and most importantly, trust in the aftermath of civil conflict.

Next, Dr. Chris Harmon notes that some Western news media seem reluctant to apply the word *terrorist* to the violent Islamist groups that are attacking targets across the Middle East and in Europe, for fear of appearing chauvinistic. Dr. Harmon shows us that anarchists and insurgents have embraced the label of *terrorist* for more than a century and suggests that, when we avoid applying it where it belongs today, we only help empower the killers. In the last of our feature articles, Dr. John Arquilla tells a ghost story intended to frighten anyone who thinks seriously about strategy. He raises three specters who, he argues, continue to haunt strategists and misguide decision making long after they should have been laid to rest.

For the CTAP interview, Africa specialists Dr. Letitia Lawson and Colonel Michael Mensch talked with Nick Tomb about security, counterterrorism, and prospects for the future across Africa's diverse nations and regions. This is an "extremely big question" as Dr. Lawson notes, about "an extremely big continent going in many different directions." Finally, ethicist George Lober takes us back to 1975 and the final days of the Vietnam War to ponder the question, Do you hold any principles you believe are worth fighting for, whatever the cost? As he tells us, one man was put to the test in Saigon and still wrestles with his decision, 40 years later.

Be sure to check out the latest essays from JSOU in our publications announcements.

We welcome your feedback, criticism, and suggestions regarding anything you read in *CTX*. Write to us at CTXEditor@GlobalECCO.org. You can send your essays, artwork, and movie and book reviews for possible publication to CTX-Submit@GlobalECCO.org.

Remember, we're here because you're there, and we depend on you, the global counterterrorism community, to be both our readers and our contributors. Keep up the good work, and stay in touch.

ELIZABETH SKINNER

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Dr. John Arquilla is a professor and the chair of the Department of Defense Analysis (DA) at the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). His research interests extend from explorations of the history of irregular warfare to studies of the complex strategic implications of the information revolution. His books include *Worst Enemy* (Ivan R. Dee, 2008); *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits* (Ivan R. Dee, 2011); and with Hy Rothstein, *Afghan Endgames* (Georgetown University Press, 2012). Dr. Arquilla has acted as a consultant to military commanders in conflicts ranging from Operation Desert Storm to the Kosovo War and the Afghan campaign. His research currently focuses on the need for nations to develop networks of their own to combat terrorists and armed insurgents.

Dr. Christopher C. Harmon currently serves on the faculty of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii. He first published on terrorism in 1982 and has taught in related programs in a half-dozen civilian and military graduate schools. From 2010 to 2014, Dr. Harmon served as the Horner Chair of Military Theory at the US Marine Corps University. Dr. Harmon is the author or editor of five books, including two editions of *Terrorism Today* (Routledge, 2000, 2007) and *Toward a Grand Strategy against Terrorism* (McGraw-Hill, 2010); he also recently contributed two essays to *Orbis*. Dr. Harmon serves on the editorial boards of *Terrorism & Political Violence* and *CTX*.

Dr. Letitia Lawson is a senior lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs at NPS. She teaches African Studies, including courses on security, government and politics, history, and cultures, as well as research methods and comparative politics. Dr. Lawson earned a PhD in political science and an MA in sociology from the University of California at Davis, an MA in international affairs from Columbia University, and a BA in economics from Smith College. She has published on various aspects of state-building in Africa and on US Africa policy. Dr. Lawson travels regularly to Africa as a member of the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) faculty.

George Lober guides US and international military students through the tricky terrain of ethics and critical thinking at NPS. He earned his BA and MA in English from the California State University system, and became interested in the study of ethics through a reacquaintance with both philosophy and critical thinking after joining the faculty of NPS in 1999.

Colonel (Ret.) Eugene Michael Mensch is a consultant on Africa. In his previous position as Africa program manager for CCMR, he conducted over 100 civil-military relations seminars in 34 African countries. After commissioning and service in the Vietnam War, he became a foreign affairs specialist and served in Africa and the Middle East for 15 years, with assignments as defense and/or army attaché in Chad, Namibia, Tunisia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Lesotho. COL Mensch has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from NPS. He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, the Army War College, the Foreign Service

Institute (Arabic), and the Defense Language Institute (Arabic and French). He is a member of the US Defense Attaché Hall of Fame.

Robert Nickelsberg has worked as a *Time* magazine contract photographer for nearly 30 years, specializing in political and cultural change in developing countries. He lived in New Delhi from 1988 to 1999, and his assignments have taken him to Iraq, Kuwait, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, and Indonesia. His images have appeared in publications including *Time*, the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, *Paris Match*, and *Stern*, and on CNN and NBC. His photographs have been exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the International Center of Photography in New York, and the New America Foundation in Washington, DC. His recent book, *Afghanistan: A Distant War* (New York: Prestel, 2013), received the Olivier Rebbot Award in 2013 for the best reporting from abroad in books and magazines. Mr. Nickelsberg is a graduate of the University of Vermont.

Lieutenant Colonel Sylvester Perera is currently working toward a master's degree in Defense Analysis at NPS. He joined the Sri Lankan Army as an officer cadet in 1990 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant to the Gemunu Watch regiment in 1992. He has held numerous appointments in command, staff, and instructor capacities during his military career, including commander of a platoon and company in the 6th Battalion and commander of the 8th Battalion of the Gemunu Watch. LTC Perera served in the directing staff of the Sri Lankan Defence Services Command and Staff College from 2012 to 2015.

Major Birger Soerensen has served in the special operations unit of the Royal Danish Army, the *Jaegerkorpset* (Hunter Corps), for more than 13 years. He has filled various functions from team leader and platoon/squadron commander to the chief of operations. He has extensive operational experience from the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan. MAJ Soerensen received his officer's education at the Royal Danish Military Academy and is currently enrolled in the Special Operations and Irregular Warfare curriculum at NPS. Upon his return to Denmark, MAJ Soerensen will serve in the newly created Danish Special Operations Command.

Nicholas Tomb is the program manager for the Africa Program at CCMR. Prior to this, he was the assistant program manager for the Collaborative and Adaptive Security Initiative and program coordinator for the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies at NPS. His focus is on executive education, conflict management, post-conflict recovery, civil-military relations, and civil society organizations. Mr. Tomb is a co-founder and former president of Global Majority, an international non-profit conflict resolution organization, and he is the board chairman of the Offset Project, a non-profit organization focused on the reduction of carbon emissions.

COVER PHOTO



Afghan widow Zahra Hussein with a relative's daughter, Abida. September 2015. © Robert Nickelsberg.

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When I was in Kabul, Afghanistan, at the end of August 2015 to oversee the installation of an exhibit of my photography in the Afghanistan Center at Kabul University, I was struck by the rapidly deteriorating security situation the Afghan people faced. There was a 28 percent increase in the number of dead and wounded security personnel, including army and police, in 2015 compared to 2014.¹ I had only seven days in Kabul, and it seemed to me that the best way I could illustrate this tragedy would be to search out and speak with a number of surviving widows: women who were bearing the brunt of survival for themselves and their children without a male breadwinner. I also wanted to find out how the Ministries of Defense and of Interior Affairs were looking after these families, especially given that the traditional Afghan fighting season would continue through the winter months and thus, more men were bound to die. Afghanistan already has an enormous population of war widows, both military and civilian, who do not receive any official support. The photographs presented in this essay, taken between 30 August 2015 and 6 September 2015, come from this project.

The War Widows of Afghanistan

by Robert Nickelsberg



Every wife of an Afghan soldier or policemen killed in the line of duty is eligible for regular payments from her husband's service branch equal to his salary. The widows of civilians killed in terrorist attacks are to be given 5,000 afghanis per month, or about USD\$80. If you ask these women how much they've actually received, however, they will tell you that they've gotten one full payment and a bit more after that. Even at best, the payments usually stop in less than a year, and the women have no further recourse. Humanitarian assistance for widows, whether from the Afghan government, a United Nations agency, or an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), is often undermined by a tradition of male dominance that goes unchallenged and perpetuates the dependent status of women. Both tradition and pseudo-legal norms such as men's hereditary property rights are codified through interpretation of the Qur'an. If school fees are thought to be too high, girls may be pulled out of school and made to take on housecleaning and other daily chores. Once they reach puberty, girls and women are traditionally kept separate from their male relatives in some form of purdah (sequestration). The intense societal pressures in rural agricultural areas further reinforce this traditional hierarchy and the vulnerability of women. As a result, most widows are uneducated and illiterate. They are often left to fend for themselves and are highly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Still, women who are resigned to their fate nevertheless possess the strength to endure.

About Marastoon

The plight of Afghan widows varies but is invariably harsh. Most of them have had to endure the subjugation of traditional arranged marriages and male domination in all aspects of life. Some of these women, however, have been able to find reprieve from the bleakness of their lives in the Marastoon Social Welfare Center in Kabul, a shelter for war widows and others without family support. The Center, which is funded by the Afghan Red Crescent Society and the Afghan government, offers these women the possibility of making their own choices about the future.

Marastoon is supported by the Afghan Red Crescent Society and also receives some government funding, though it's unclear how much support comes from the government in Kabul and in what form. The Center sits well off the main road in western Kabul, in an extensive campus-like garden setting that has been maintained since the 1930s as a government-run orphanage and as a home for the mentally handicapped. Marastoon suffered greatly during the Afghan civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal and fell into neglect under the Taliban. Since 9/11 and the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the Center has regained its stature with donations from the international community and funding from foreign NGOs. It now houses 24 families. Women have access to classes in tailoring and dressmaking, embroidery, basic carpentry, and needlepoint. Marastoon also provides a free health clinic to families in the neighborhood, although it's very hard to determine who is or is not eligible. There does not, however, appear to be a literacy program for the residents. Providing education for women is considered a financial burden in a country where unemployment can approach 30 percent. For chronically cash-strapped Afghan government agencies, reforming assistance programs and supporting the growing number of widows is not a priority.

Overall, media access to Marastoon is spotty. To make the photographs in this essay, my team had to deal directly with people in the housing and training programs. There's very little precedent in Afghan culture and society for an institution like Marastoon. Humanitarian and charity work are not popular sectors of Afghan society, and the social welfare offices are rarely fully funded. As is often the case in Asian countries, aid and assistance are provided within the extended family structure. The Afghan Red Crescent Society is the main link for Marastoon and its residents to outside funding and assistance, the United Nations, and the various embassies that oversee their countries' aid programs.

Amina





Jamella + Abida

In a country torn apart by four decades of political instability and war, Jamella personifies a growing number of Afghan women who have suffered from their husband's fatal decision to join either the Afghan National Army or National Police. Jamella's husband, a 35-year-old Afghan National Army soldier, was killed by the Taliban nearly four years ago, when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his American-supplied truck, killing its occupants. The Afghan military compensated Jamella, who was 34 at the time, by paying for her husband's coffin, contributing some rice, oil, and other food items to the family, and giving her a bit of cash. As mentioned earlier, widows are entitled to a pension equivalent to their husband's salary, about \$120 a month, but Jamella has not heard from the Ministry of Defense or the army for nearly three years. In 2015, Jamella married off her 15-year-old daughter to lighten her financial load and moved with her other child into her parents' home in Lagman province, two hours from Kabul. Soon after, however, her mother died, and her brothers could no longer support her. She and her child have now been in the Marastoon Social Welfare Center for over a year.





Abida

Abida's husband, a taxi driver, died from injuries suffered in a suicide car-bombing in 2012. Two of her children now stay with her at Marastoon while three others live with relatives outside Kabul. As is customary in Afghanistan, Abida was offered marriage to her brother-in-law, but when she declined, she and her children had to leave her in-laws' house. She had neither savings nor a pension from her husband's death. A doctor who treated her husband before he died urged her to sell one of her children to lessen the financial burden. Instead, Abida is taking tailoring classes at Marastoon to become a dressmaker and gain some financial independence. It's not uncommon for the downtrodden in Afghanistan to pay off personal or family debts by offering a child to another family as an indentured servant or farmhand. For girls and women, the burden and stigma of poverty are even more pronounced than for men.





Safia

Safia Tajweed, 36, lives with her two sons at Marastoon, while her five daughters live with assorted relatives. Four years ago, in 2012, Safia's husband, an Afghan Border Police officer from Badakhshan province, was killed when the Taliban overran his post. Safia was given a compensation payment of 100,000 afghanis, or \$2,000, when his body was returned to her. Since her husband's burial, she has not heard from the police and remains ignorant about the status of her pension. When I spoke with her, Safia remarked that an Afghan woman can't fight for her rights in Afghan culture, least of all in the culture of the military establishment.





Zahrah + Abida

Zahra Husseini, 45, sits in her Kabul apartment with a relative's daughter, Abida, right, 3 September 2015.

Zahra's husband died in the late 1990s from injuries suffered in a rocket attack that struck their shop during the civil war with the Taliban. She worked for nearly two years as a cook at a Kabul NGO but stopped working when a rotator cuff injury in her shoulder left her barely able to lift her arm. Zahra has three sons, one of whom is paralyzed from a car accident. Her second son works in a bakery and earns \$2.50 per day. Her third son goes to school. Zahra pays \$20 a month for rent and hopes the NGO she worked for will pay for her needed shoulder surgery.





Hamida

Hamida works as a cleaning woman for a small NGO, where she earns 10,000 afghanis per month, or \$160. Her husband was also killed by Taliban forces in the late 1990s, near Quetta, Pakistan, where the family was taking refuge. As ethnic Hazaras and Shi'a Muslims, Hamida and her husband had fled Kabul from fear of persecution by the predominantly Sunni Taliban. Hamida, with her two sons and three daughters, returned to Kabul once the Taliban were removed from power following 9/11. After their return, her eldest son was killed in a suicide bomb attack. Her surviving son suffers from rheumatism and is unable to work. Hamida's main concern now is traffic gridlock at rush hour, which increases the likelihood of suicide attacks at the intersections she must cross every day on her way to and from work.





Amina

The suffering of Afghan women is not, of course, confined to war widows. Amina Sajadi's husband is in jail for 10 years because of a propane tank explosion that killed his brother, a crime Amina claims he did not commit. With two children to support, Amina, 27, lacks the money to hire a lawyer to appeal the sentence. After her husband's incarceration, she tried to support the family by working as a cleaning woman, until the prospect of destitution led her to Marastoon two years ago. She has no parents to assist her. She sees her husband once a year, and he calls her if he needs anything. He has been in jail for four years and won't be released until 2022.

Final Thoughts

The cultural headwinds in Afghanistan are generally against organizations like Marastoon that support female empowerment and gender equality. Such programs are considered a threat to the traditional male power structure, and liberal Western countries and organizations have had to temper their public enthusiasm for aid and assistance programs that could actually endanger women in the religiously conservative regions of the country. I'm grateful to the women of Marastoon for their courage and for allowing me to share their stories and images. ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Nickelsberg worked as a *Time* magazine contract photographer for nearly 30 years.

EDITOR'S NOTE

To learn more about Robert Nickelsberg and his career as a photojournalist for *Time* magazine and other publications, see "The CTAP Interview: Robert Nickelsberg," in *CTX* 5, no. 1 (February 2015): <https://globalecco.org/ctap-interview-robert-nickelsberg-time-magazine>

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NOTES

- 1 An estimated 16,000 Afghan security personnel were killed or wounded in 2015. The figure in 2014 was approximately 12,500. Tom Vanden Brook, "Afghan Casualties Surged in 2015 because of Increased Taliban Attacks," *USA Today*, 4 January 2016: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/01/04/gen-john-campbell-taliban-afghanistan/78262480/>

Walking the Thin Red Line: DANSOF in Afghanistan

MAJ Birger Soerensen,
Danish SOF

DENMARK HAS A LONG TRADITION OF CONTRIBUTING TO STABILIZATION engagements. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Denmark was heavily involved in peacemaking and peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, specifically in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo. From 2003 to 2007, Danish forces participated in the stabilization mission in Iraq, notably in the southern region around Basra.¹ Denmark has also been engaged in Afghanistan since 2002, primarily in Helmand province between 2006 and 2014. This main effort was supported by extensive operations centered on a battalion battle group of about 700 soldiers close to the major city of Gereskh. Other branches of the Danish government have been active in Helmand as well, including a police detachment and political, legal, agricultural, and health advisors.

These missions contributed valuable lessons learned with respect to the Danish government's whole-of-government approach to stabilization engagements. This approach is described in a 2013 report titled *Danish Integrated Stabilization Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World*.² The intentions of this policy—to stabilize post-conflict areas by taking advantage of and creating synergy between every Danish, international, and local government tool—were well-known to the members of Task Force 7 (TF7) when we deployed to Helmand in 2012. The policy further emphasized that we were working in another country, on that country's terms, and that we must observe and respect its culture and customs. The policy's goal was to build up the country's institutions to be self-sustaining rather than make them dependent on Danish technologies and procedures.

Background on DANSOF

The Danish Special Operations Force (DANSOF) is composed of a maritime SOF unit, the Royal Frogman Corps (*Froemandskorpset*), and a land SOF unit, the Hunter Corps (*Jaegerkorpset*). During the period described in this article, the units were under the command of the Danish Army Operational Command and the Royal Danish Navy. In 2015, both units were transferred to the newly formed Danish Special Operations Command.³

Historically, DANSOF has focused on the two NATO SOF tasks of direct action and special reconnaissance.⁴ A third SOF task, military assistance, which is in part a combination of what US SOF call foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), and counterinsurgency (COIN), has largely been neglected by Danish SOF.⁵ Some of the other roles within military assistance that are relevant to stabilization engagements, however, are familiar to DANSOF.

For example, DANSOF has provided special support to the Danish police and supported Danish conventional forces with stabilization operations. In fulfilling these missions, DANSOF personnel gained experience in training and operating in a non-kinetic (or less kinetic) environment.

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SANCE.

At the beginning of 2011, we learned that DANSOF would contribute to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) SOF task of building up Afghan provincial response companies (PRCs)—quick-response police units capable of undertaking special operations. DANSOF decision makers therefore decided to improve their knowledge of the SFA/FID/COIN aspects of military assistance. They opted to send a fact-finding team to Kabul to join the US TF10, a unit made up of an Operational Detachment Bravo (ODB) from Special Forces Group 10 that was building up several PRCs in the provinces around Kabul. I was part of this preliminary fact-finding mission and commanded the partnering detail of TF7 on its first four-month rotation. For the duration of TF7's mission, I was in command of the operations section back in Denmark and closely observed the progress of TF7 and PRC-Helmand (PRC-H)—the PRC that TF7 would eventually be responsible for.

Gaining Valuable Knowledge with TF10

The Danish fact-finding team joined TF10 in April 2011. The team staff detachment, of which I was a part, stayed with the US ODB in Kabul, while two Danish SOF teams, along with embedded SOF from Hungary and Romania, joined two US Operational Detachment Alphas (ODAs) in the provinces of Wardak and Logar. This international variety of SOF personnel did much to improve our learning experience by giving the DANSOF staff and operators an opportunity to observe each team's approach to training, advising, and assisting the PRCs.

“WE COULD EASILY
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WESTERN UNIT.”

The DANSOF fact-finding team stayed with TF10 for three months, until July 2011. The staff detachment participated in planning sessions, monitored ODA missions, and accumulated valuable lessons from TF10 staff. Foremost was the lesson on how to build a self-sustaining PRC. Imagining ourselves in the Afghans' place and envisioning what they needed was both a practical and an intellectual challenge. TF7 would need a keen understanding of Afghan culture and customs, as well as Afghan approaches to both daily routines and operations. Otherwise, we could easily make the mistake of building the PRC as a Danish or Western unit. The Afghans are a much more patient people than the Danes, and it became apparent that TF7 could easily do irreparable damage by trying to rush the creation of PRC-H. On the one hand, we had to ensure the company had the necessary depth and substance to sustain itself and be effective. On the other hand, to do this it seemed we would have to introduce a measure of organization that the Afghans lacked. Another issue was that, too often, Western units doing SFA fixated on the kinetic part of a unit—the platoons and teams—and ignored the staff, the very part of a unit that makes it self-sustainable.

We decided to focus on the entire PRC, from the commander down to each individual policeman. The staff's lessons were supplemented by observations from the SOF teams in Wardak and Logar. One important lesson was to weigh the need for training the PRC against the constant pressure from ISAF SOF to produce results, such as neutralizing (capturing or killing) adversaries or stopping major criminal activities. This dual purpose, coming down from ISAF SOF, could potentially confuse TF10 and other TFs. The main purpose of TF10 was to build the PRCs up to a self-sustainable level before the end of 2014, at which time ISAF combat troops were to leave the country. At the same time, ISAF hoped to keep the adversary suppressed to a manageable level, which meant that TF10 was often forced to take the PRCs on missions for which the Afghans were, at best, only partially ready. The result was that too much of the time allocated for

the main mission was wasted on the secondary mission. The fact-finding team observed this delicate balance and noted its importance for building a sustainable internal security force.

TF7: Deployment and Encountering PRC-H

After completing a thorough pre-mission training session in Denmark, a DANSOF preparation team, of which I was a member, deployed in January 2012 to Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand. The preparation team established basic necessities like setting up the camp for TF7, and more important, we initiated the training, intelligence, and operations procedures required for the mission. We also quickly began developing a relationship with the British Helmand brigade (TF Helmand), which operated the main ISAF base in Lashkar Gah, Main Operating Base Lash (MOB Lash). MOB Lash was to be the main base for TF7 for the duration of the mission, while TF Helmand would provide essential supporting elements such as a quick reaction force, counter-IED teams, medical support, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). We also built important relationships with other SOF units in Helmand, and with the US Marines in MOB Bastion, in the western part of the province.

In early February, TF7 arrived in Helmand and immediately started its mission. TF7 had organized its 51 personnel into four elements—staff, combat support, combat service support, and combat—tailored to match its PRC counterparts (see figure 1). Resource shortages limited DANSOF's concept for a more robust task force, but overall, TF7 was well organized to partner with PRC-H. PRC-H had already been partnering with a British conventional unit for six months, and this unit conducted the handover to TF7. Though the British had done the best they could in the circumstances, PRC-H was in terrible shape on all accounts: manning was at just 50 percent of the planned 125 policemen; the base was run-down; poor hygiene was spreading sickness; and the food was limited and of poor quality.

As the commander of TF7's partnering effort,

“TOO MUCH OF THE TIME ALLOCATED FOR THE MAIN MISSION WAS WASTED ON THE SECONDARY MISSION.”

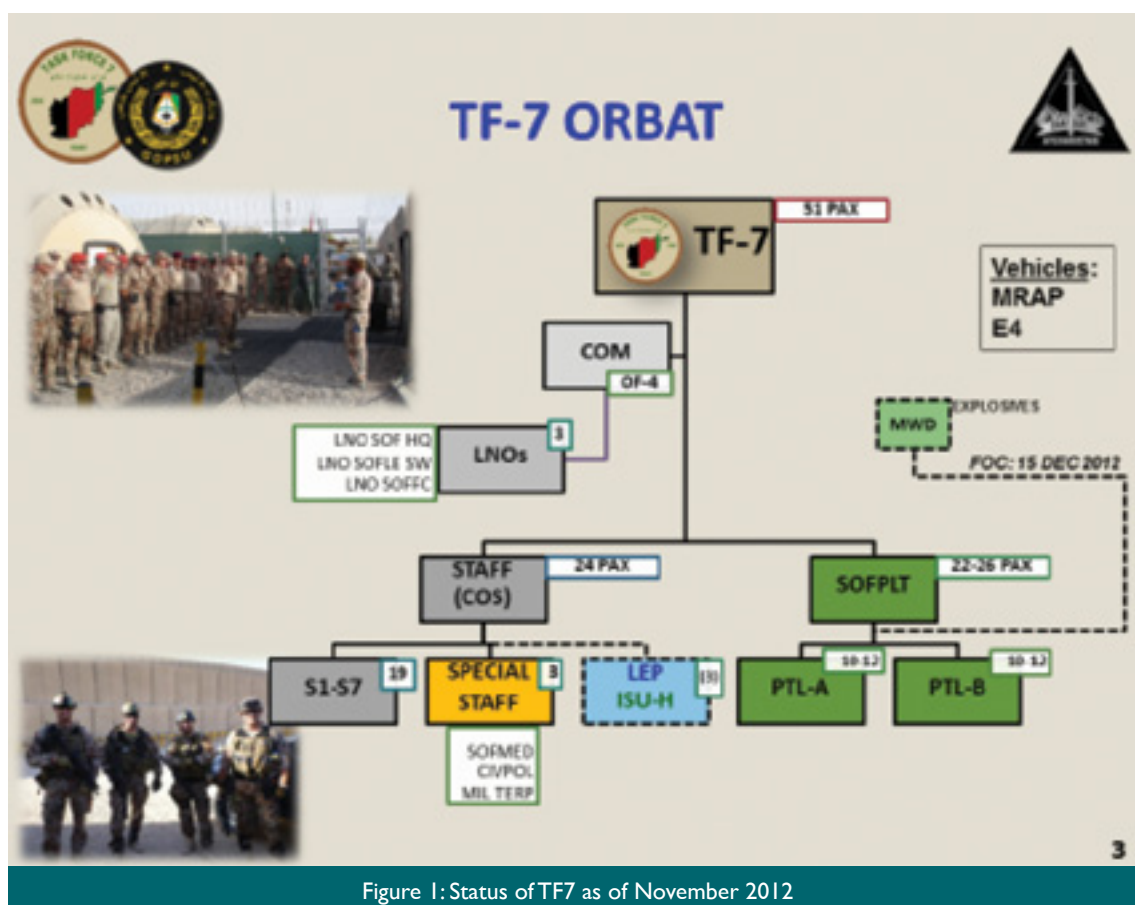


Figure 1: Status of TF7 as of November 2012

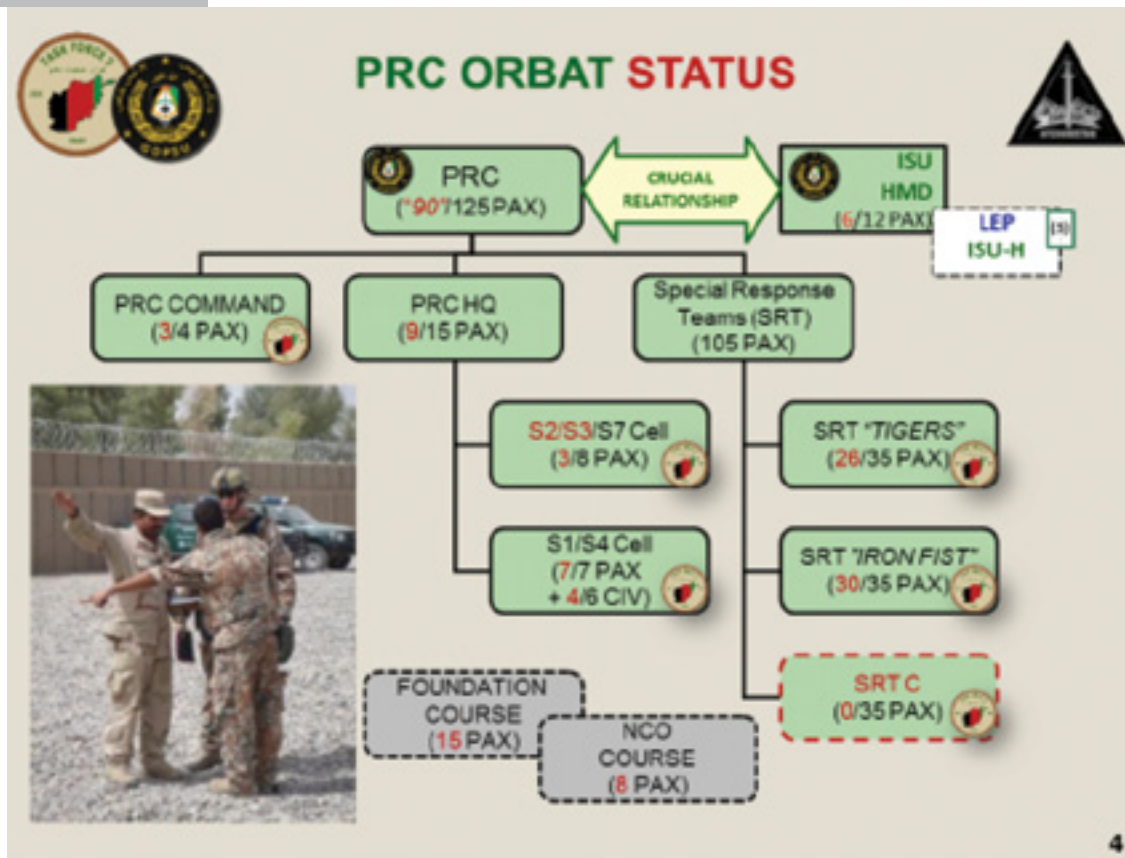


Figure 2: Status of PRC-H as of November 2012
(Red numbers indicate actual personnel, black numbers indicate intended personnel.)

I was also the direct mentor to the PRC commander. My first move was to consult with him for an in-depth assessment of the PRC. The PRC's makeup was based on a standard American SOF unit, with the usual headquarters (HQ) unit (four personnel), a staff (16 personnel), and multiple combat units (three platoons of 35 personnel each) (see figure 2). As previously mentioned, personnel levels

were low, and I would describe many of the 60-odd policemen present as, at best, farmers with guns in their hands—which, in fact, they mostly were. The PRC commander had simply hired all available hands in an effort to meet the demands of the ISAF-styled organization.

Making a Plan for a Self-Sustainable PRC-H

With this information as a baseline, TF7 took a few days to update the two-year plan we had made back in Denmark for the partnering mission with PRC-H, using onsite observations to fill in the gaps in the initial plan. The components of the new plan were as follows.

1. *A timeline with milestones for essential development phases of the PRC over the two-year period.* This timeline included an initial six-month *partnered* phase, in which TF7 would lead most training sessions and head all operations. This was to be followed by an *enabled* phase of approximately eight months, during which the Afghans would gradually take over parts of the training and lead operations, closely supported by TF7. In the final 10-month *advanced* phase, PRC-H would conduct operations on its own, monitored by TF7, and would receive our advice and support only in extreme cases. After this, TF7 would redeploy back to Denmark, leaving in place a PRC-H that could work independently with minimal or no supervision.
2. *A plan to build relations and cooperation with other key Afghan units, HQs, and legal entities.* The most important of these was the Helmand

provincial police headquarters (PPHQ), which was the PRC's main supplier of intelligence and administrative and logistical support, including manning, food, accommodation, and vehicles. The PPHQ also ran targeting meetings, at which potential targets for investigation or arrest were assessed and distributed among the available police units. The PRC was "the new kid on the block," which made it essential to quickly integrate the PRC into the PPHQ and make it part of the Afghan security system and targeting cycle, as opposed to having it remain dependent on ISAF. An essential actor in the police system was the chief of the PPHQ. To facilitate a good rapport between TF7, PRC-H, and the provincial police chief, our TF7 commander served as a direct liaison. He and the chief held weekly meetings to ensure they shared an understanding of the direction and goals for PRC-H.

Another important HQ within the PRC-H orbit was the General Directorate of Police Special Units (GDPSU) which, on paper, was in charge of the PRC and all intelligence surveillance units. The GDPSU was responsible for most operational and administrative issues for the PRC, but in many situations the proximity of the PPHQ to PRC-H made it the de facto HQ for all practical purposes. An intelligence surveillance unit was the PRC's direct partner for gathering human intelligence and was the main source of intelligence for the PRC. Consequently, we invested a considerable amount of effort in that relationship. It was equally important to have good connections in the Afghan judicial system, because the PRC would be going after some of the "high-value targets" in the area. Too often, suspected criminals were apprehended but not prosecuted—a practice that did not engage the Afghan judicial system as a whole and in many cases led to a suspect's release. For this reason, it was essential that the PRC actually bring those it apprehended to justice according to the Afghan rule of law. Other important potential partners included the many Special Police units in Helmand, with whom the PRC could cooperate for training or operations, and the newly formed Afghan helicopter unit.

3. *A program to build the internal capacity for a balanced and self-sustainable PRC by training all sections of the HQ, staff, and combat units.* This was, simultaneously, one of the most important and most difficult tasks, because the Afghans were not familiar with our Western penchant for thorough organization. We had to balance between Western organizational methods and Afghan culture—and to a certain extent, impose our ideas and methods on the Afghans. This dilemma had to be handled delicately, or our best efforts could prove counterproductive. In addition, developing the whole PRC organization meant training all members of each element not only in tactical and technical police skills, but also in other general skills such as literacy.
4. *A program to develop a cadre of Afghan instructors as quickly as possible to support the PRC.* This would be accomplished by sending policemen to non-commissioned officer training at an Afghan NCO school, and through additional TF7 training. As the cadre gained proficiency, the Afghans themselves would take an increasing role as instructors in the PRC's regular training program.
5. *A plan for selecting and training the future leaders of the PRC as soon as possible.* The PRC lacked planners, practitioners, and role models, and was sorely in need of qualified leaders. Similar to the plan for developing

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instructors, we would remedy this by sending candidates through the NCO school, the officers' academy, and daily officer and NCO training.

The Plan Unfolds

The plan did not unfold smoothly. Even with our systematic preparation, many surprises hit us on a weekly, if not daily, basis, mostly related to our focus on self-sustainment. TF7's conviction that we had to help the Afghans stand on their own two feet was so central to our concept that we were ready to sacrifice operational success for a time. For months, we struggled with manning, the targeting process, and the Afghan judicial system, while slowly raising the PRC's organizational proficiency to an acceptable level. In addition, we balanced the need for intensive instruction to drive progress with the need for the Afghans to learn from their own mistakes. In this process, we did all we could to protect the PRC from overly complicated or dangerous missions, or took the lead ourselves if we thought the potential gains outweighed the risks. Another issue was equipment: we repeatedly pushed for the kinds of gear that the PRC would be able to maintain themselves, while avoiding expensive technical tools they could never hope to maintain after we left. Again, this focus on self-reliance sacrificed short-term results in operations in favor of healthy long-term development.

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Another challenge to our efforts was corruption. Every layer of the Afghan justice system, including the police, seemed to be exposed to a high level of corruption. We constantly had to judge whether an issue of misbehavior was worth pushing or better abandoned to avoid further complications. For example, only two months into our mission, we had to ask the provincial police chief to fire the PRC commander after the commander was caught misusing his power. This set the PRC back a bit, because the commander took some of his closest men with him when he left. In the end, though, it proved to be a good decision, because the new commander, who arrived a month later, had Special Police experience and went on to play an essential role in making the PRC self-sustainable over time.

While developing the PRC, TF7 occasionally supported the British-led TF Helmand. This TF, however, usually conducted operations with large armored infantry formations using conventional search and destroy tactics that did not sit well with our Special Police force and did not seem to reflect efficient COIN tactics.⁶ It was my impression that these operations seldom achieved much, because the Taliban simply refused to give battle and disappeared into the countryside. We therefore cooperated primarily with other Afghan Special Police forces and focused on building long-term relations for the PRC.

After 10 months of “massaging” the provincial justice system and building the PRC's proficiencies, we reached a milestone. PRC-H went on its first warrant-based operation, carrying an arrest warrant signed by both the Lashkar Gar prosecutor and judge. PRC-H was, to my knowledge, the first Afghan PRC to achieve this, and the operation was subsequently used as a model throughout the ISAF system. As TF7's redeployment deadline in December 2013 approached, PRC-H achieved further successes that, in my mind, set it apart from other Afghan units. It was almost fully manned; it had a solid cadre of officers and NCOs; it was well-integrated into the Afghan police organization; and it could conduct successful, independent operations based on information from an intelligence surveillance unit or the PPHQ. In sum, we felt we could hand over a PRC that was

not a Western-style police unit, but a self-sustainable Special Police unit tailored to Afghan conditions.

Relations to ISAF SOF

Initially, we shared a good understanding of the purpose of the mission with ISAF SOF. Upon arriving in February 2012, we presented our ideas for a late-2013 end-state and received good feedback. Our plan to deliver a self-sustaining PRC in two years seemed ambitious but possible as long as the PRC's development was gradual. To this end, ISAF SOF agreed that operations, at least for a time, would come second to training and the general development of the unit. But while our superiors agreed in theory, the reality was different. In the early stages of our mission, we were allowed to concentrate on the build-up process, but after two to three months, it became apparent to us that ISAF SOF wanted us to push the PRC harder than was previously agreed.

Although the development of a self-sustainable Afghanistan was the articulated goal of ISAF, a conventional focus on neutralizing the enemy prevailed in fact. I observed this tendency to let the kinetic effect on the enemy take priority over development of the PRCs in many of my mission reports, and my commander had heated discussions with ISAF SOF on this issue. Such an operational focus went against several counterinsurgency ground truths, such as separating the insurgents from the population rather than attacking them directly, and building an indigenous police force that could provide the intelligence and manpower needed to facilitate that very separation.⁷ We were left trying to balance what we thought was the right thing to do, and what supported the goals of Danish stabilization policy, against the demands of ISAF SOF. I am certain that ISAF SOF was under great pressure from the Joint Forces Command (JFC) to deliver results “on the battlefield,” and that it was ultimately within the JFC that this conventional campaign focus originated. In many respects, I cannot help thinking that ISAF was repeating mistakes from earlier US COIN campaigns, such as in Vietnam.

“ISAF SOF WANTED US TO PUSH THE PRC HARDER THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY AGREED.”

Conclusion

The most important conclusions I draw from this experience relate to the need to build self-sustaining indigenous security units. In this article, I have concentrated on the best practices and successes of TF7 and PRC-H, but during TF7's deployment in Helmand, it was apparent to me that many TFs used their position leading Afghan forces more as an excuse for undertaking operations than an opportunity to guide the Afghans to a high and sustainable level of proficiency.⁸ In my mind, this was due to the tacit understanding within JFC and ISAF SOF that their main purpose was to kinetically neutralize the enemy faster than it could reproduce itself. I challenge that understanding. I contend, moreover, that for a country to eventually be able to stand on its own two feet, partners must concentrate on working with and through that country's existing systems to separate the insurgents from the population. For TF7, that meant we constantly focused on improving the ability of the PRC to sustain itself within the Afghan system.

An important part of our plan was to make sure we gave the PRC equipment that its members could use and maintain without us. It would have been pointless to train them to depend on devices like mortars or UAVs, which they could not use after we left. Likewise, it was paramount that the Afghans learned to use their

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own indigenous organizations, both those within the PRC and external ones such as the various HQs and the Afghan judicial system. Corruption was another ever-present obstacle, and I cannot say we outsiders fully understood all the ways it operated. We did our best to balance a tolerance for some levels of corruption as an integral part of Afghan life with the need to strike down hard when it hindered our goal of building a reliable police force that the people of Afghanistan might eventually learn to trust.

I see some contradictions between, on the one hand, a Danish integrated stabilization engagement that works with and through the local population and emphasizes cultural awareness and self-sustainability—a whole-of-government approach—and on the other hand, a US-NATO-led kill-or-capture COIN campaign, such as we have seen in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Additionally, the ineffectiveness of the conventional armored infantry tactics used by TF Helmand in COIN operations shines a light on the potential usefulness of smaller, more flexible units such as DANSOF stabilization engagements.⁹ ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- 1 Stephen A. Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2011), 52: http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/059/59-3-1/cmh_59-3-1.pdf
- 2 Udenrigsministeriet (Department of Foreign Affairs), *Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World* (Copenhagen: Udenrigsministeriet, November 2013): http://um.dk/en/~media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Danida/Nyheder_Danida/2013/Stabiliseringspolitik_UK_web.pdf
- 3 I refer to the two units as DANSOF here, because they performed the mission in an integrated joint manner, with similar capacities and qualifications.
- 4 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*, AJP 3-5 (Brussels: NATO, 2013), 2-1–2-2.
- 5 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, Joint Publication 3-05 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 16 July 2014), xi: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_05.pdf
- 6 Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 11.
- 7 Ibid., 10–13.
- 8 It has not been a “dance on roses” for PRC-Helmand since the last soldier of TF7 left in early 2014. A new commander was struck by an IED and lost both his legs. When the former commander took over again, he lost a leg to another IED. Changes have also taken place in the Special Police organization, which was dealing with major corruption and operational challenges, so that PRC-H has been restructured under another name. Taking all of this into consideration, I have refrained from saying anything conclusive about the far-reaching achievements of PRC-H and TF7.
- 9 I am presently investigating these issues for my master's degree thesis, entitled *How Danish SOF Can Support the Danish Integrated Stabilization Engagement Policy*.

The Lessons I Learned: Civil-Military Cooperation in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka

*LTC Sylvester Perera,
Sri Lankan Army*

THE SRI LANKAN ARMY, THE “GUARDIAN OF THE NATION,” FULFILLED its duty to the motherland in 2009 by eradicating terrorism from the island after three decades of ruthless war. After the war ended, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-affected areas in the north and east became particularly important for national development. Compared with the rest of the country, the socioeconomic inequalities in these areas were clearly evident. The government needed to promote rapid development in all aspects of the economy, particularly infrastructure development. The use of the army for these development projects was a feasible and effective option for the government to fill the post-war vacuum in resources and people.

I was the commanding officer of the 8th Battalion of the Gemunu Watch in the Sri Lankan Army between 2010 and 2012. Our battalion was charged with conducting resettlement and reconstruction operations in remote areas of Batticaloa Province, along the eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka. After three decades of conflict against the LTTE, the government of Sri Lanka and its military embarked on a number of large- and medium-scale infrastructure development projects across the country. Batticaloa Province, where my battalion was deployed, had been devastated by the fighting. The people in the area were very poor, a situation the LTTE had exploited to ensure their own survival. Many of the people had been highly dependent on and supportive of the LTTE during the conflict, so it was not an easy task for us to win them over and gain their trust.

I was well positioned to compare these duties with my experience in 1995 in the Northern Province district of Jaffna, where I was involved in the resettlement of the Tamil people immediately following the liberation of the Jaffna Peninsula from the insurgent Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).¹ From these two experiences, I learned that communication with local residents, and making the effort to understand their aspirations and attitudes *before* we initiated our civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) projects, was the key to success. People must be committed to and responsible for improving their own way of life; if not, government development projects will not help them to achieve good results and will lead to problems such as unrest in the long run. It is of paramount importance to help people who have experienced a crisis, such as war, to heal their wounds, if we are to win their hearts and minds.

The Resettlement of the Tamil People in Jaffna, 1995

My battalion was deployed to the residential area of Jaffna city in 1995 to provide security and resettle the Tamil people who had been displaced during the conflict. During the initial stage of this project, we provided for residents' basic needs, including the distribution of food items. We also looked into the status of various welfare facilities throughout our area of control, such as medical clinics. After the resettlement process was complete, however, our battalion maintained a close watch on the behavior of those who had been resettled, because we felt

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that our efforts to enhance their welfare were not as fruitful as we had expected. For example, at the food distribution points, we asked people to fall in line to receive the parcels. Despite being in serious need of essential food items, some people were reluctant to form a queue to receive the parcels.

When we questioned them, we came to understand that there was a significant problem concerning their caste.² Members of the higher caste were reluctant to move freely and stand in line among those of the lower castes. As a result, we had to change our distribution system to avoid provoking a negative situation. We also opened up shops where higher caste people could purchase the basic necessities that they were reluctant to accept for free. This problem of caste arose in other matters as well. If we had opted to ignore these concerns, it is likely that whatever services we extended to the people of Jaffna in good faith would not have been welcomed. It is even possible that neglecting to navigate within the deeply held caste traditions could have reignited local animosities and incited hostility towards the military forces.

Post-Conflict Welfare Projects, 2009

After defeating the LTTE terrorist group in 2009, the Sri Lankan government made immediate infrastructure development a priority. It implemented broad development programs called *Uthuru Wasanthaya* (Northern Spring) and *Nagenahira Udanaya* (Awakening East) to improve the infrastructure. These projects included rebuilding and repairing roads, hospitals, schools, and regional government administration buildings of the Northern Province and the Eastern Province, both of which had been completely devastated by war and neglect. The government allocated 253 billion Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) to the Northern Province and LKR 6.1 billion for the projects in the Eastern Province, which were intended mainly to raise the general standard of living in the district of Batticaloa.³ In addition, the army was assigned to provide humanitarian assistance and basic infrastructure development, primarily through housing and road construction.

FILLING THE
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AND PROVIDING
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My battalion was assigned to the Batticaloa district in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province, a majority Tamil region where there had been heavy fighting during the civil conflict. The battalion's chief role was to maintain security, but it also assisted in the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure in the area and the resettlement of displaced people. CIMIC was a new concept for the troops of my battalion, who had previously been engaged in combat operations in the north. We were hopeful that this assistance would favorably influence the local people's perception of the army. The battalion was closely involved in various projects in the area, such as constructing houses and roads, and assisting people to develop their livelihoods. In addition, with the approval of the security force headquarters, I obtained the assistance of the Engineer of the Plant Squadron and the experienced troops of the engineer regiment to construct a minor road. Filling the dual roles of conducting CIMIC operations and providing security for the area was not an easy task for the members of my battalion, but they performed extremely well in all their military and civil-military projects, thanks to the hierarchical military structure: its command system, leadership, commitment, dedication, and discipline.

Good Intentions Can Go Wrong

As became clear from my earlier experience in Jaffna, good intentions can go wrong. My battalion was tasked to open a "welfare shop" to provide basic

necessities to the public, but the project did not have good results. At that time, there was no regular transportation system to give the rural population access to the main town, and there were only a few local shops owned by villagers. The items in these rural shops were very expensive compared to the shops closer to the main town because of the costs of labor and transportation. To remedy this, the battalion invested LKR 200,000 to open a village shop that could provide basic goods at a cheaper price, because we had no labor and transportation costs and were able to purchase items in bulk at wholesale prices. The local people benefited greatly from the new shop.

After a few months, however, we began to hear complaints against the soldiers running the shop from certain villagers in the area. When we inquired into the complaints, we learned that the lower prices in our welfare shop had badly affected the families who earned their income through the village shops. For that reason, when I took over command of the battalion, I decided to close the welfare shop immediately. Although the shops owned by the villagers had higher prices, they were an important source of income not only for the shopkeepers, but also for many local families that were involved in other businesses connected to these shops. We had to ensure that our welfare projects were helping and not harming the villagers and their local economy.

As a result of this experience, I decided to make arrangements to improve the income and livelihood of the villagers in the area of Batticaloa West, where my main camp was situated. Their main sources of income were cattle farming, fishing, and rice cultivation. The villagers found it difficult to find a steady market for their products, so I started a yogurt production project with milk we purchased from the local farmers. To increase the involvement of our own personnel in this project, some of our disabled soldiers were trained to run the manufacturing process. The purchase of their milk was a great help for the farmers and their families, raised their incomes, and made them happy. We arranged to sell the yogurt at a nominal rate to the other military camps and made it available to our food supplier, who, in return, sent it back to the camp twice a week as dessert with other

“ IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE MINDFUL OF THE SOURCES OF INCOME FOR LOCAL PEOPLE. ”



rations. Similarly, we ordered several varieties of small fish from various sources and introduced them into the main tank (reservoir). Although this project took a long time to bring results, the fishermen in the area benefited in the long run. I also made arrangements to distribute 5,000 jackfruit plants among the farm families for cultivation.⁴

Helping People Help Themselves

As mentioned earlier, I received permission from higher headquarters to engage the Sri Lankan Army Engineers to construct a minor road in my area. Apart from the engineers' work clearing mines and conducting demolition in support of the resettlement process, their road and bridge development projects were much superior to those of civil contractors in terms of cost, time, and the quality of work. The army's use of advanced technology and machinery, plus the fact that its workforce did not draw overtime and was not paid by an employer who needed to make a profit, considerably reduced the costs of construction.

Yet the road construction that the engineers had carried out in the area so far was not sufficient to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the local Tamil people, so I made the request for another small road to be built. Surprisingly, however, this effort also negatively affected the villagers for a number of reasons. When a civilian contractor undertakes a project such as this, he rents housing, land, and other local resources, including laborers. The military, however, is self-sufficient in this respect. Consequently, villagers lose the opportunity to gain employment and supply the required resources for the project. It is important to be mindful of the sources of income for local people. Simply putting in a road will not satisfy all their needs and expectations. For this reason, I decided to stop using the army for road construction, and the project was continued by private sector organizations and NGOs, which recruited local villagers to carry out the work. This decision to allow the private sector and NGOs to get involved created favorable conditions for the villagers and simultaneously increased both their incomes and their commitment to development.

“OUR ENDEAVOR
IMPROVED THE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE LOCAL
SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND THE VILLAGERS.”

In this post-conflict situation, the government's welfare projects extended to rebuilding religious and other civilian institutions, and again were conducted by the army. Our forces cleared and renovated hospitals, schools, religious sites, and other government institutions in order to improve living standards, establish a link with local leaders, and win the hearts and minds of the general public.

The administrators of these local institutions also had a tendency to call in the security forces to conduct welfare services, perhaps because they knew that army personnel, who were noted for their discipline, would take up the challenge and complete the tasks efficiently. We realized, however, that taking over these kinds of jobs would not pay good dividends in terms of community relations. Continuous military engagement in the rebuilding of religious and social institutions disrupted the community's active participation in its own religious and social affairs. As a remedial measure, I coordinated with religious leaders in the area and had them organize some *sramadhana* (volunteer labor) in their area of control. We helped by supplying amenities such as water bowsers (tankers), transportation, and snacks, so that the volunteers could finish these jobs in good spirits and with camaraderie, and thereby remain involved. Our endeavor tremendously improved the relationship between the local social institutions and the villagers, under the patronage of the military.

The army, including my battalion, also carried out some housing construction projects for displaced and homeless people in the war-affected areas. The government funded these projects with the help of some foreign and non-governmental organizations. When the army took over these projects, it did not give money directly to the homeowners or involve them in their own home construction, but simply went in and did the work. Some families were unhappy with this, due to a lack of personal satisfaction and sense of independence. Therefore, the villagers preferred the civilian government and non-governmental organizations to fulfill their housing needs. In most cases, people received cash from these sources to build their houses in stages and were highly committed to meeting their construction goals in order to obtain successive cash grants. The masons, carpenters, and laborers involved in these projects were hired from among the villagers, and even the suppliers of building materials were locals. Furthermore, villagers were free to choose their own housing plans, which allowed them to save some of their building funds to spend on other needs.

I was still eager to help these villagers. To supply their needs for inexpensive cement blocks to build their homes, I installed two machines for the production of this material. The project was able to meet local requirements, and the cost savings were passed on to the villagers. As a result, the villagers in our area were highly satisfied: they received their cement block supply at concessional rates and built their homes according to their own specifications.

Improving Local Government, Civil Institutions, and Education

The army was occasionally ordered by higher headquarters to involve itself directly with local administration by superseding local authorities, such as town councils, local councils, and various other state-sponsored welfare institutions. The military had the required leadership capacity and structure to complete projects more efficiently than could civil organizations, and its personnel were able to work around the clock to finish a task. Such successes caused further problems, however, because the civil authorities came to take it for granted that the military would be able to easily overcome every problem, even a natural disaster, without the involvement of the civilian sector. From my point of view, this negligence and lack of coordination by local government officials left a vacuum in the operational capacity of the civil organizations and created more havoc for the people. I therefore became a mediator for the local leaders to help them carry out their responsibilities and facilitate the effective functioning of their organizations.

Our other main concern was to encourage the villagers to educate their children. Most families could not afford to purchase books, clothing, and other necessary school supplies, and children were often required to look after the family's cattle and help with other farming work instead of attending school. To improve the children's educational prospects, I worked to get volunteers involved. My effort paid good dividends, and we received books, stationery, and clothing to distribute among the poor children of the village. In addition, I persuaded local religious leaders to talk to parents about their children's academic needs. With the distribution of the necessary school supplies, parents felt encouraged and voluntarily made arrangements for the schooling of their children. Gradually, school attendance in the area increased. Due in some part to our work, the cultural, educational, and social aspects of the community began to show signs of improvement, and the villagers took increasing responsibility for their lives.

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NEGLIGENCE
AND LACK OF
COORDINATION BY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS LEFT
A VACUUM.
”





Conclusion

Although most of the Sri Lankan army's projects in Batticaloa Province were successful, complete success was elusive for many reasons. First, we had to develop a basic understanding of the people's attitudes and concerns. Second, the military had difficulty convincing local officials to commit themselves to their work and take responsibility for restoring the smooth operation of the civil administration. Third, we needed to take into account the sources of local incomes, so that the direct involvement of military personnel in restoration projects would not deprive people of income from a variety of sources. Finally, we needed to make sure our presence and activity did not adversely affect the local people's ability to organize as an independent, self-sustaining society.

I gradually overcame these misjudgments by developing close connections with the people in my area and working to understand their aspirations and attitudes. I encouraged people to become committed to and responsible for their own lives. When a conflict ends and it is time to rehabilitate and reconstruct the basic infrastructure in war-torn areas, the military must be ready to cooperate with the government, NGOs, and civil organizations at every level, while bearing in mind the keys for success that I've outlined here. ♦

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LTC Sylvester Perera serves in the Sri Lankan Army.

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NOTES

- 1 For the author's account of his experiences as a battalion commander during the Sri Lankan civil uprising (1992–2009), see Sylvester Perera, "The Sri Lankan Civil War: A Personal Reminiscence," *CTX* 4, no. 1 (November 2015): <https://globalecco.org/the-sri-lankan-civil-war-a-personal-remembrance-col-sylvester-perera-sri-lankan-army>
- 2 Caste systems have existed for centuries among both the Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups of Sri Lanka. Before the kingdom of Ceylon became the Republic of Sri Lanka, the ethnic Sinhalese people were divided into several castes according to their livelihoods. But with the collapse of the kingdom, the caste system among the Sinhalese gradually faded away. Sri Lanka's Tamil population historically was strongly influenced by South Indian culture and its religious system of castes. Today's Tamil population is split more or less evenly between the highest caste, called *Vellala*, and everyone else. The Tamil people of Jaffna, in particular, still strictly adhere to the rules of caste, and caste is a distinctive part of their identity. *Vellala*, for instance, will never mingle with lower caste people in any social or religious activities.
- 3 "Sri Lanka to Spend 253 Billion Rupees for Development of Northern Province," *ColomboPage*, 20 May 2011: http://www.colombopage.com/archive_11/May20_1305914434CH.php; "Defence Spokesperson Refutes Adverse Propaganda: Batticaloa Geared for Polls," Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka, 3 March 2016: http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20080228_01
- 4 Jackfruit, a cousin of the breadfruit, is an important staple food crop in Sri Lanka and other parts of South Asia.

That Word *Terrorist*, and What Terrorists Say about It

*Dr. Christopher C. Harmon,
Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Cen-
ter for Security Studies*

*Prepare what force you can and cavalry to terrorize the enemies of
God and your enemies.¹*

Armed with this Qur'anic verse, Karim Bourti, a member of the transnational Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in North Africa, explained his pride in considering himself “a Muslim terrorist,” saying he “loves” the model terrorist of this new century.² “All those who are sincere with Allah support Osama Bin Laden. Any Muslim who doesn't love Bin Laden has hypocrisy in his heart.”

Algerian by birth, Bourti became a naturalized citizen of France in 2000 and spent years organizing international jihad from Paris, until he was stripped of his French citizenship in 2006. He told a journalist at length about his aggressive “mission to send young Muslims living in France to get killed abroad,” for which he collected thousands of francs, and later euros, at mosques or over the phone. He lectured young men on emulating the courage of those fighting in Chechnya and Palestine. He praised “martyrdom operations”—otherwise known as mass homicide bombings. His personal successes include recruiting Hervé Djamel Loiseau and Brahim Yadel, both of whom trained in the al Farouk camp in Afghanistan run by Osama bin Laden. Loiseau died in the Tora Bora mountains in the early weeks of the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan, and Yadel landed in Guantanamo Bay detention.

Karim Bourti is an archetype of Islamist terrorism in our times: geographically deracinated but strongly ideological; an Algerian who plotted against his own government as well as that of his host country, France; a Muslim who schemed to kill Muslim clerics and politicians; and a member of the GSPC, which, like many disparate small Sunni groups, was later folded into al Qaeda. Bourti is murderous, but he claims to kill for “idealistic” reasons. He lived comfortably in the open, liberal democracy of France but was part of a clandestine organization that was working to wreck it. He came to France as a refugee from a war-torn North African country and as a citizen was protected by French police, yet he loathed France for being too secular and too supportive of the Algerian government and for siding “too closely with the Americans.”³

Some social scientists and theorists believe the use of the word *terrorism* reflects only the prejudices and self-interested opinions of “establishment” elites and Westerners. But Bourti is a proud terrorist who offered the opinions quoted above to an Algerian journalist, whom he mistook for an ally. Everything he said confirms the profound seriousness of the ideas behind terrorist acts and the global fight against international terrorism. Within one generation, our world has seen millennium bomb plots; the 9/11 attacks; devastating bombings in Ankara, Bali, and Casablanca; well-sequenced multiple explosions on transit systems in Britain and Spain; and “complex attacks” in which infantry tactics were used against the innocent in public places such as Mumbai, or were combined with improvised explosive devices, as is frequently done in Iraq.

**BOURTI IS
MURDEROUS,
BUT HE CLAIMS
TO KILL FOR
“IDEALISTIC”
REASONS.**



The calculation required to accomplish all such killings is sometimes openly betrayed in the speech that frames terrorists' assaults. Terrorists' own words belie the pious excuses they typically offer for their actions. Yet hardly anyone who is studying the phenomenon of twenty-first-century terrorism has noticed this disjunction.⁴ Even many scholars commonly repeat the dismissive cliché that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Certain terrorism analysts think it's a safe assertion that no sub-state actor would ever accept the label *terrorist* for himself. But some of these actors embrace the label, and we should recognize that their admissions are important.

Fourteen issues of the al Qaeda magazine *Inspire* appeared between 2010 and 2015, offering readers insight into the organization's purposes and strategies. *Inspire's* editors flagrantly deploy the very words (*terrorist* and *terrorism*) that some mainstream English-language media outlets discourage or forbid their own writers from using, to avoid inflaming readers. Qur'anic verses, such as the earlier quote beloved by Karim Bourti, and teachings relevant to terrorists from lesser sources in Islam appear throughout *Inspire's* pages. Such teachings may take the narrow argumentative line of Osama bin Laden, that "good terrorism" is readily distinguished from "bad terrorism" by the virtuous intentions of the jihadi perpetrators. This argument is also made in issue 12 (November 2015) of the Islamic State's magazine *Dabiq*.⁵

The *Inspire* editors present whole pages of exhortations to terrorism written by Abu Musab al-Suri, a deep student of Islamist militancy who is known primarily through his internet presence. His encyclopedic study *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance* argues, for example, that even a bomber not seeking salvation may still be praised, for "he terrorizes the enemy; that is good too, because this is the best of all spites and has benefits for Muslims."⁶ After its initial issues, *Inspire* began saluting itself and its own fearless approach to political struggle by claiming to have inspired specific incidences of terrorism. For example, the September 2015 issue offers an article on "Remembering Boston" and "the youth who terrorized the disbelievers" in their American homeland, referring to the two Tsarnaev brothers who carried out the bombing.⁷ The same issue also trumpets the death of a cartoonist named on *Inspire's* earlier "wanted" lists.⁸ From the standpoint of criminal law or just common sense, that is known as a confession!

In revolution or in any conflict, however rightful the cause, the intentional abuse of the innocent is reprehensible and is punishable under international humanitarian law and under several clear Security Council resolutions such as 1373 (2001).⁹ Within any legitimate polity during peacetime, if the people were to condone acts of terrorism done

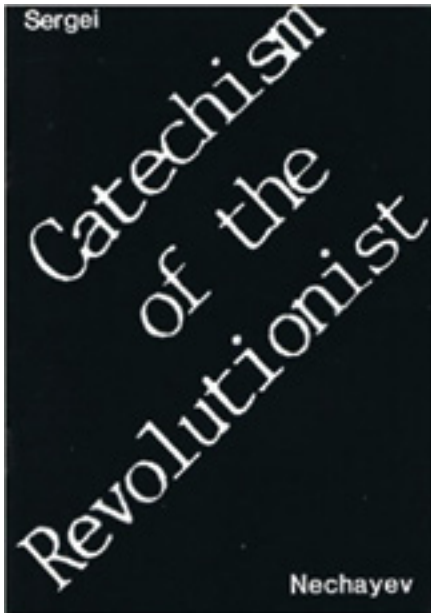
on their behalf, they would have to abandon moral logic and humanity and surrender the public space meant for sane debate and healthy disagreement in politics.¹⁰ But terrorists choose the weapon of fear purposefully, knowing that the power to shock is one they want to wield. If we listen, we often hear the killers themselves saying—sometimes quietly, sometimes boldly—that they understand this tool of terrorism, they respect its power, and they rely on it to achieve their goals. Although we

may not trust terrorists' words, the words themselves often belie the notion that *terrorism* is a meaningless term.

**"GOOD TERRORISM" IS
DISTINGUISHED FROM
"BAD TERRORISM"
BY THE VIRTUOUS
INTENTIONS OF THE
PERPETRATORS.**

Early Uses of the Term *Terrorist*

Arguments in favor of terrorism had been developed by nineteenth-century European anarchists, many of whom despised religion. The highly moralistic Russian anarchist Alexei Petrovich Kropotkin wanted attacks to focus on infamous despots and known torturers among the police. But even he accepted the bold and shocking acts of "insanity" carried out by other anarchists, because the ideas of these "madmen" would seep into other men's minds and win converts to the anarchist cause.¹¹ Assassinations won praise for being destabilizing. Sergey Nechaev's *Catechism of the Revolutionist* (1869) called for targeting the "cleverest and most energetic figures" in government "to shatter its strength."¹² He warned against pity while praising "merciless destruction." In 1880, while in Geneva, Russian revolutionary Nikolai Morozov published an exhortation to "terroristic revolution."¹³ His praise of terrorism noted "this advantage that it can act unexpectedly and find means and ways which no one anticipates. ... All that the terroristic struggle really needs is a small number of people and large material means." Still other anarchists of that era mocked any discrimination in the selection of targets and approved of all violence, including petty crime, for the damage it could do to society generally.¹⁴ All acts were "good" if they helped to make governance impossible—the strategic goal of anarchism. A German immigrant to America, Johannes Most, was a dynamite enthusiast and relished the fear that explosions could incite in people. He not only preached in favor of such attacks for years but



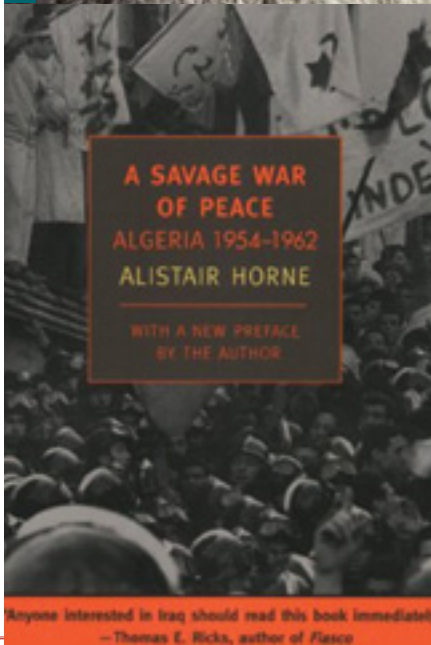
Sergey Nechaev, 1847–1882



Alexei Petrovich Kropotkin, 1842–1921



Johannes Most, 1846–1906



Anyone interested in Iraq should read this book immediately
—Thomas E. Ricks, author of *Fiasco*



Frantz Fanon, 1925–1961



Abane Ramdane, 1920–1957

also published a newspaper, *Freiheit* (Freedom), in which he called on fellow anarchists to carry them out. One 1884 article by Most was simply titled “Advice for Terrorists.”¹⁵

Perhaps the single most influential book in modern terrorism studies is Alistair Horne’s *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954–1962*.¹⁶ In it, Horne explains how moderate Algerian nationalists were ignored, used, or misused by hardliners in the National Liberation Front (FLN), the main opposition group. The group began its campaign to expel the French colonial regime in Algeria through politics and guerrilla warfare against the French security forces, both of which can be seen as legitimate avenues in the context of anti-colonial revolution. The FLN also used limited acts of terrorism against certain loyalist Algerians. Within two years of the conflict’s outbreak, however, a more muscular position was staked out by fierce revolutionaries such as Abane Ramdane, who relished the slogan, “One corpse in a [dinner] jacket is always worth more than 20 in uniform.”¹⁷ That slogan embodies a strategy adopted by the FLN that broke the laws of warfare and led directly to infamous plastique (IED) attacks on popular cafés and the bombing of a dance hall that left girls and boys with missing legs lying on a burning floor. When psychoanalyst and FLN propagandist Frantz Fanon wrote essays defending such shocking violence, illegitimate belligerents everywhere were encouraged.¹⁸ Some came to Algiers from abroad in 1962 for the FLN victory celebrations at the end of the war.

**BIN LADEN
CHARACTERIZED
THE 9/11 ATTACKS
AS “BENEVOLENT
TERRORISM.”**

Decisions by Muslim extremists to use purposeful cruelty against civilians must not be confused with mainstream Islamic faith. Algeria is a Muslim nation, but the FLN were, above all, nationalists, and some members were secular. The strenuously religious cadres among them were either marginalized or absorbed.

Terrorism in the Modern Era

In the mid-twentieth century, exhortations to terrorism came from a different ideological center. Brazilian Marxist Carlos Marighella wrote his *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* in 1969, in which he argued for terrorist acts, including bank robberies, to shake “capitalism’s nerve system.”¹⁹ Marighella used the word *terrorismo* to promote acts of violence as a means to effect “irreparable loss against the enemy.” Acts of terror, he wrote, should be executed with “the greatest cold-bloodedness.” He concluded, “Terrorism is an arm the revolutionary can never relinquish.”²⁰ Marighella died in a shootout with police later the same year. But his manual became celebrated, widely translated, and deeply influential.

Osama bin Laden rarely used the word *terrorism* unless it was in an accusation against others. He declared that Western media terrorize their own consumers, implanting fear and helplessness.²¹ Yet even bin Laden, in a video he made months after the attacks against American targets on 9/11, characterized these as “benevolent terrorism”²² intended to force the United States to abandon Israel. In a message to Taliban leader Mullah Omar that was found on an al Qaeda computer in Afghanistan, bin Laden crowed that most Americans were suffering psychological problems following the attacks on their cities.

The fatwa that bin Laden issued on 23 February 1998 calling for jihad against Jews and Westerners is now infamous, but little attention was paid to it at the time of publication. The fatwa was signed by an international array of six Muslim

terrorist leaders, including the head of the Egyptian group Al Jihad, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who now leads al Qaeda. The document claimed religious inspiration for bin Laden's order, which repudiated the established global practice of seeking to limit fighting to declared belligerents: "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country."²³ In a propaganda statement he delivered three months later, titled "The Nuclear Bomb of Islam," bin Laden declared that "it is the duty of the Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorize the enemies of God."²⁴

Terrorism is also the explicit objective of two different al Qaeda training manuals discovered in the years prior to the 9/11 attacks. The first, found in the early 1990s, filled 11 volumes. Along with a flood of pages on tradecraft, there was an exhortation to practitioners to assassinate prominent Arab leaders and to kill as many as possible in Western lands, at events such as Christmas gatherings. Institutions, clubs, and hospitals in Jewish communities should be carefully chosen to cause as many deaths as possible. A second manual consisting of about 180 pages was found in Manchester, England, in May 2000.²⁵ It denounces "apostate" Arab rulers, Jews, and others; repeatedly urges violent actions to create fear; and advises on such means as poison and explosives, among other weapons. Explicitly mocking "Socratic debates [and] Platonic ideals," the manual exhorts "the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction." It claims that holy text and commentary support this jihad, including this Qur'anic passage: "Strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know."²⁶

While doubts remain about Ramzi Ahmed Yousef's ties to al Qaeda, many analysts believe he was acting for the then five-year-old organization when he directed the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City. A truck bomb, placed in the parking garage under one tower, was intended to topple that tower against the other. While it failed to accomplish that goal, six people were killed, 1,000 were injured, and as late as 2006, thousands of others were reported to have developed respiratory diseases from the blast. At his hearing, Yousef boasted: "Yes, I am a terrorist and I am proud of it." That line was re-quoted in a feature story on Yousef in *Inspire*.²⁷

Within the larger international militant Islamist community, there are other confreres and allies just as outspoken as Yousef. One is a Syrian-born Londoner named Omar Bakri Muhammad, who is the founder of the city's branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Islamic Liberation Party). He had warned of a big al Qaeda operation in London a year before the 7 July 2005 bombing of four London subway trains (the attack now known as 7/7). In an interview with a Portuguese magazine, Bakri extolled terrorism as a tool.

We don't make a distinction between civilians and noncivilians, innocents and nonbelievers. Only between Muslims and nonbelievers. And the life of a nonbeliever has no value. ... We don't say, 'I'm sorry, it was a mistake.' We say 'You deserved it.' We assume the purpose is to kill as many people as possible, to spread the terror [to] people in the West. ... Terror is the language of the 21st century. If I want something, I terrorize you to achieve it.²⁸

Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, an Egyptian extremist who was tried in Italy in 2006, allegedly kept and shared extensive video and audio files of jihadi materials, including a song

with the lyrics: "We are terrorists, we want to make it known to the world, from West to East that we are terrorists, because terrorism, as a verse of the Qur'an says, is a thing approved by God."²⁹ Another file, a "Poem for Jihadists," merely repeated again and again, "I am a terrorist; I am a terrorist."³⁰ Another example of a proud sponsor of terrorism is Dr. Yusuf Abdullah Al-Qaradawi, a bank man-

ager and shareholder in the bank Al Taqwa. Interviewed in 1999 by the *Palestine Times*, Al-Qaradawi advocated operations in which a "Muslim fighter turns himself or herself into a human bomb that casts terror in the hearts of the enemy."³¹ He called for financial and moral support for such acts.³²

Conclusion

Some in the counterterrorism community have a profound analytical problem because they cannot understand the open advocacy of attacks on the innocent in attempts to create a general condition of fear. The word *terrorism* is no mere label but the description of a reality. Understanding what extremist Islamic terrorists tell us is part of understanding their strategies. If we can do that, we will understand much more about what their regime may be like should they succeed in their quest for a global caliphate.

“
AT HIS HEARING,
YUSEF BOASTED: “YES,
I AM A TERRORIST AND
I AM PROUD OF IT.”
”

DABIQ

12 ISSUE

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JUST
TERROR

It is always possible that these terrorists will “reform” once in power and turn to governance. But it is equally possible that their terrorism against actual and perceived opponents will only get worse, as happened in the case of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s ISIS thugs boast of terrorizing their enemies—foreign and domestic—in order to maintain rule in the “caliphate.” When ISIS’s chief spokesman, Abu Mohammed al Adnani, railed at length against Shi’a Muslims, Yazidis, Christians, Jews, and others in an address he gave on 22 September 2014, he sounded like a fascist orator of the 1930s.³³ It was obvious that his words were meant to justify the continuous murders, maimings, and menacing ISIS was carrying out against members of these groups in the territories it controlled. Self-satisfaction about “terrorizing” and “humiliating” enemies drips off the full-color pages of *Dabiq*, the disturbing ISIS magazine. After the attacks in Paris in November 2015, the e-zine’s cover story was “Just Terror”—terrorism that is just.³⁴ The story’s text lauded terrorism for Allah’s sake and demanded credit for the Paris attacks and the downing of a Russian passenger jet over Egypt in October.

Terrorism, as the words of perpetrators remind us, is about demonstrating power. It is a strategy for wielding power in politics, even when religious, anarchistic, or other motives are proclaimed more loudly. The terrorists’ own words should be prompts to our global community: vicious and inhumane approaches to politics must always be avoided, deterred, and countered with reasonable human ideals. ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- For several translations of the verse this sentence comes from, see “Compared Translations of the Meaning of the Quran—8:60: al-Anfal—The Spoils of War”: http://www.internetmosque.net/read/english_translation_of_the_quran_meaning/8/60/index.htm
- Bourti’s quotes and the information on Bourti in this and following paragraph are from Mohamed Sifaoui, *Inside Al Qaeda: How I Infiltrated the World’s Deadliest Terrorist Organization*, trans. George Miller (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2003), 70–73. Originally published as *Mes “frères” assassins: Comment j’ai infiltré une cellule d’Al-Qaida* (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 2003).
- Loathed* is apparently not too strong a word: “Hatred of France is the unifying thread running through the testimonials” of the jihadi inmates interviewed by Farhad Khosrokhavar, an eminent French social scientist, for his book *When Al Qaeda Talks: Testimonials from Behind Bars* (Paris: Grasset, 2006). See also John Rosenthal, “The French Path to Jihad,” *Policy Review* 139 (October/November 2006): 39–59. These attitudes are particularly chilling in light of the January 2015 and November 2015 mass murders in Paris.
- Much of this article is adapted from the preface to my book *Terrorism Today*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008). I have continued to collect and analyze examples of how terrorists admit that the word applies to themselves. I was unaware of anyone else writing at length about this topic until 2011, when Alex P. Schmid devoted some paragraphs to this phenomenon in his *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (New York: Routledge, 2011). I am obliged to Dr. David Tucker for commenting on a draft of the present article for CTX.
- “Just Terror,” *Dabiq*, no. 12 (November 2015).
- The Call*, heavily edited for length by Jim Lacey, appears in English as *A Terrorist’s Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab Al-Suri’s Islamic Jihad Manifesto* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 179. Other exhortations to terrorism by Al Suri were selected for publication in issues 2 and 5 of *Inspire*.

- 7 "Assassination Operations," *Inspire*, no. 14 (September 2015).
- 8 Ibid., 7, 35–37. The issue also offers provocations to assassinate anti-black racists in the United States at the conclusion of the magazine's six-page article on "The Blacks in America."
- 9 United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1373, 28 September 2001: [http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2012/docs/United%20Nations%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201373%20\(2001\).pdf](http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/specialmeetings/2012/docs/United%20Nations%20Security%20Council%20Resolution%201373%20(2001).pdf)
- 10 See Christopher C. Harmon, "Terrorism: A Matter for Moral Judgment," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 1–21.
- 11 The quotations and information in this paragraph may be found within the original documents, reprinted in part in Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander, *The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology* (New York: Meridian, 1987). The original documents and their locations within Laqueur and Alexander's *The Terrorism Reader* are provided in subsequent notes. This volume, revised and reissued in 1991 by Penguin, remains one of the most useful collections of primary sources available to our field. See also the "Terrorism" section of *Bibliographies in Military Studies*, ed. Dennis Showalter (New York: Oxford University Press, April 2014): <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/obo/page/military-history>
- 12 Sergey Nechaev, *Catechism of the Revolutionist* [1869], excerpted from Michael Confino, *Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin-Nechayev Circle* (London: Alcove Press, 1974); repr. in Laqueur and Alexander, *The Terrorism Reader*, 68–72.
- 13 Nikolai Morosov, "The Terrorist Struggle" [1880], excerpted from Feliks Gross, *Violence in Politics* (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1972); repr. in Laqueur and Alexander, *The Terrorism Reader*, 72–78.
- 14 On the similarities between criminality and anarchist activity, see Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). Pages 137, 141, and 146 include writings by certain anarchists who use the word *terrorist* to describe themselves.
- 15 Johannes Most, "Advice for Terrorists," *Freiheit*, 13 September 1884; repr. Laqueur and Alexander, *The Terrorism Reader*, 100–8.
- 16 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: Viking, 1977).
- 17 Ibid., 132, 184–87.
- 18 Editor's note: Dr. Harmon, with coauthor Paula Holmes-Eber, wrote at greater length about the use of terrorism as a tactic in the Algerian conflict in his article "Women in Terrorist Undergrounds," *CTX* 4, no. 4 (November 2014): <https://globalecco.org/women-in-terrorist-undergrounds>
- 19 Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* [June 1969], Adelphi Papers 79, ed. Robert Moss (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971). See pages 36–37 on "Terrorism" and "The War of Nerves." A different edition (Vancouver, Canada: Pulp Press, 1974) includes an additional section, "By Way of Introduction," that also mentions terrorism with approval. The translators are not named in either version.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 See the transcript of an interview with Osama bin Laden, *Frontline*, May 1998: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>
- 22 Oliver Burkeman, "New Video Shows Bin Laden Alive," *Guardian*, 27 December 2001.
- 23 "Text of World Islamic Front's Statement Urging Jihad against Jews and Crusaders," *Al-Quds al-Arabi* (Arabic-language newspaper in London), 23 February 1998, trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Besides al-Zawahiri, the five other signatories are Osama bin Laden; Abu-Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, a leader of the [Egyptian] Islamic Group; Shaykh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan; and Fazlul Rahman. Rahman was described as the emir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh, but scholars, reporters, and al Qaeda analysts seem unable to establish with certitude who he is and whether he remains alive.
- 24 Quoted in the indictment of Osama bin Laden, Muhammad Atef, et al., (for bombings of US embassies in East Africa), U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, 6 November 1998: 32.
- 25 "Declaration of Jihad against the Country's Tyrants: Military Series," an undated manual found in an al Qaeda safe house, translated by US authorities, and used in the trials of suspected al Qaeda members for bombings. Subsequently published as *The Al Qaeda Training Manual*, ed. Jerrold Post (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: US Air Force Counterproliferation Center, 2004). I have used this manual frequently in classes I teach on terrorism.
- 26 *Al Qaeda Training Manual*, 6. This quotation appears to be a different translation of the same Qur'anic passage cited by terrorist Karim Bourti earlier in the article.
- 27 *Inspire*, no. 13 (Winter 2014). Page 41 carries a Ramzi Yousef profile and quotation.
- 28 Bakri continued: "The word 'terrorism' is not new among Muslims. Muhammad said: 'I am the prophet who laughs when he's killing the enemy.' It is not only a question of killing. It's laughing while we are killing." These quotations first appeared in *Publico* and were reprinted in *Harper's Magazine* in July 2004. A detailed examination of Bakri's life and work can be seen at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Bakri_Muhammad.html
- 29 Elaine Sciolino, "From Tapes, a Chilling Voice of Islamic Radicalism in Europe," *New York Times*, 18 November 2005: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/18/world/europe/from-tapes-a-chilling-voice-of-islamic-radicalism-in-europe.html>
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 *Terrorist Threats to the United States: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims of the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives*, 106th Congress (26 January 2000), 26: https://books.google.com/books?id=VmB-8ZWpaywC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Yara Bayoumy, "Isis Urges More Attacks on Western 'Disbelievers,'" *Independent*, 22 September 2014: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-urges-more-attacks-on-western-disbelievers-9749512.html>
- 34 "Just Terror," *Dabiq*, no. 12 (November 2015).

Three Ghosts Who Haunt Modern Strategy

*Dr. John Arquilla,
US Naval Postgraduate School*

I SEE DEAD STRATEGISTS.

Let me help you see them, too. For just a moment, avert your gaze from the latest Islamic State attacks and atrocities. Instead, concentrate along with me on catching a glimpse of the three ghosts who haunt the halls of the US Pentagon and the central military administrations of most developed nations—the three ghosts who drive policy in costly, counterproductive directions and keep much of the world in a permanent state of chaos.

The most senior specter is that of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), whose brilliant early campaigns gave way, as his power grew, to a series of increasingly bloody slugging matches between massive armies, epitomized by the carnage of Borodino, the most Pyrrhic of his victories.¹ British strategist Basil Liddell Hart observed that Napoleon had “pinned his faith to mass” and had even inspired the influential Prussian philosopher of war, Carl von Clausewitz, to become “the Mahdi of Mass,” as Liddell Hart dubbed him.² US General Colin Powell’s eponymous doctrine of “overwhelming force”—still regnant in most strategic circles—reflects the enduring power of the ghost of Napoleon and is responsible for the trillions of dollars wasted in Afghanistan and Iraq over more than a dozen years. The Mahdi of Mass and his heirs are all but irrelevant in the face of today’s reality of terrorism and insurgency.

In the United States, the ghost of Napoleon has haunted leaders of both major political parties until they have agreed to lavish trillions more dollars on the Pentagon in the coming years—despite simultaneous stern demands on both sides for more fiscal austerity. The remedy to failures in the field, as Napoleon’s spirit still whispers more than 200 years after the disaster of the Russian Campaign and his undoing at Waterloo, is to add more of everything. Not one to accept a call to negotiate peace even after leaving hundreds of thousands of his troops dead across Russia, the French emperor had raised yet another massive army—and quickly lost it in the great “Battle of the Nations” at Leipzig.³ Napoleon’s first abdication followed six months after this disaster.

**NAPOLEON
INSPIRED
CLAUSEWITZ TO
BECOME “THE
MAHDI OF MASS.”**



The second spirit hovering over strategic affairs today is that of US Army Brigadier General Billy Mitchell (1879–1936), an early apostle of modern air power. Almost a century ago, in the decades between the two world wars, then-Colonel Mitchell held that swift offensive strikes from the sky could bring enemies to heel without the need for land or naval action. Like so many evangelists, Mitchell suffered for his beliefs, including a court martial conviction for insubordination. But within a few short years, his ideas had captured the imagination of senior military and political leaders around the world.

As a result of Billy Mitchell's crusade, air power has been used repeatedly over the last 75 years with the explicit aim of "bombing to win," in the words of University of Chicago professor Robert Pape.⁴ The current war against ISIS is highly dependent on aerial bombing, and the Saudis have applied Billy Mitchell's formula to their air campaign in Yemen. Almost all such efforts have failed—including the counter-ISIS air war and the Saudi bomber offensive against Yemen's insurgent Houthis—but the ghost of Billy

Mitchell still hovers over headquarters planners, cockpit and drone pilots, and the high councils of all too many nations, luring them on, siren-like.

The third apparition haunting global strategy and policy is that of Osama bin Laden (1957–2011). The man who started history's first great war between nations and networks is only five years dead, yet it is already clear that he is—in an ominously Dickensian sense—the ghost of conflicts to come. His demise seems only to have scattered the seeds of networked insurgency and terrorism—old and new—across the globe: from a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan to al Qaeda "franchises" everywhere; from the quickly metastasizing ISIS splinter group in Syria and Iraq to Boko Haram in Nigeria; from Jemaah Islamiya and the Abu Sayyaf group in Southeast Asia to Hizb ut-Tahrir around the globe. The list goes on and on, with countless small cells—such as those that spawned recent attacks in Paris and Brussels—operating throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

Aside from having set the course for globally networked terrorism, Osama bin Laden has, with his death, done much to keep counterterrorist strategy firmly misdirected. For if Napoleon's ghost encourages an over-reliance on sheer force, and Billy Mitchell's spirit wails "No boots on the ground!" Osama bin Laden's spectral presence deceives many around the world into thinking that the assassination of terrorist leaders can bring their organizations to the verge of strategic defeat, as former US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was wont to say.⁵

Nothing could be further from the truth. The so-called Global War on Terror has morphed into terror's war on the world. And the ghost of bin Laden no doubt smiles a chilling smile at the notion that counterterrorist efforts to defeat networks can succeed by taking out their "leaders," such as Abu Sayyaf, the ISIS oilman killed last year in an American special operations raid in eastern Syria, and ISIS's number two man, Mustafa al-Qaduli, who was killed this past March.⁶ The greatest strength of networks lies, after all, in their members' ability to pursue a common goal without much (if any) central control. Failure to appreciate this is the first step on the path to defeat—at ruinous cost.

In sum, Napoleon's haunting presence keeps alive the doomed, darkening strategic dreams of victory by sheer force of numbers. Billy Mitchell's spirit still conjures up enchanting images of the potential to conduct successful campaigns with clinical detachment and from a safe distance. These ghosts of wars past and present cripple our efforts to cope with the realities imposed by bin Laden's prescient vision of conflicts to come.

All three ghosts must find their rest if there is to be any chance of forestalling an age of perpetual warfare in which global defense policies are tethered to strategies that prove ever more costly and ever less effective. But what is needed to end the haunting is not a Jennifer Love Hewitt-like "ghost whisperer."⁷ Instead of whispers, a loud, lively discourse among the living must unfold. The ravaging Napoleonic appetite for more, *toujours* more, must be quelled. Mitchell's keening call for precision bombing from afar must be heard as the siren's song that it is. And finally, the obsession over taking out enemy "leaders" like bin Laden should simply be eliminated from strategic planning.

Once free from all this haunting, global counterterrorism efforts may finally focus on the two true lessons of warfare in our time: (1) Small, internationally-networked teams on the ground can greatly improve the effectiveness of air power; and (2) a shift in focus from eliminating leaders to illuminating network nodes and cells—and then striking them at many points at the most opportune moment—will have truly lasting effects.

Perhaps, if shifts of this sort are made, I'll stop seeing dead strategists. ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

- 1 The Battle of Borodino (7 September 1812), immortalized by Leo Tolstoy in *War and Peace*, was the only large-scale pitched battle between the imperial Russian army and the invading *Grande Armée* of France as Napoleon drove for Moscow. See "Napoleonic Wars: Battle of Borodino," About.com, 11 March 2015: <http://militaryhistory.about.com/od/napoleonicwars/p/Napoleonic-Wars-Battle-Of-Borodino.htm>
- 2 Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), Chapter 15: "J.F.C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart": <http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/CIE/Chapter15.htm>
- 3 The Battle of the Nations (16–19 October 1813), also called the Battle of Leipzig, was the last battle of massed armies in the Napoleonic Wars, before Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo. See *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Battle of Leipzig": <http://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Leipzig>
- 4 Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996).
- 5 See, for example, C. Dixon Osburn, "Post-War Counterterrorism," *Huffington Post*, 16 October 2012: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-dixon-osburn/postwar-counterterrorism_b_1954919.html
- 6 See Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt, "ISIS Official Killed in US Raid in Syria, Pentagon Says," *New York Times*, 16 May 2015: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/world/middleeast/abuseyyaf-isis-commander-killed-by-us-forces-pentagon-says.html>; Lucy Westcott, "ISIS Deputy Abdul Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli Killed by U.S. Troops," *Newsweek*, 25 March 2016.
- 7 Jennifer Love Hewitt is an American actor, director, and producer who starred in the CBS television series *The Ghost Whisperer* from 2005–2010. See "The Ghost Whisperer," IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0460644/?ref_=nm_flmg_act_9

THE CTAP INTERVIEW

*Interviewed by Nicholas Tomb,
US Naval Postgraduate School*

Dr. Letitia Lawson and Colonel (Ret.) Eugene Michael Mensch, US Naval Postgraduate School

ON THE
SECURITY
FRONT, I AM
QUITE
OPTIMISTIC
ABOUT THE
MEDIUM TO
LONG TERM.

THIS INTERVIEW IS TAKEN FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE COMBATING Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).¹ Dr. Letitia Lawson teaches courses on security, government and politics, history, and cultures in Africa. She frequently travels to the African continent as a faculty member for the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR). Colonel Michael Mensch, former Africa program manager for CCMR, is currently a consultant on African affairs. On 8 December 2015, Nick Tomb talked with Dr. Lawson and COL Mensch about security and counterterrorism across the African continent.²

NICHOLAS TOMB: To begin with, what's your big-picture analysis of how the continent is doing today and its prospects for security and development in the future?

DR. LETITIA LAWSON: Africa is an extremely big continent, and it's going in many different directions at the same time. In some obvious places, like the Central African Republic [CAR], things are not getting better. In other places, like Ethiopia and Rwanda, the economies are growing quickly. Some countries are in fact doing extremely well economically, and I think that the success of those is likely to affect the rest of the continent, although a lot of the economic growth in the region is still driven by commodity prices. Africa was largely unaffected by the 2008 financial crisis because it is disconnected from that part of the global economy, but its economic progress as a region is very much driven by, or related to, trade with China. As China's economic growth has now slowed, exports to China have slowed, and as a result, growth projections have declined for the continent as a whole. The main thing going forward, in terms of both the economies and the security of Africa's countries, is to appreciate their diversity.

On the security front, I am quite optimistic about the medium to long term. What has struck me most in the last 10 years is the extent to which the more capable African countries are beginning to behave like everybody else in the international system. Governments are using their security forces to pursue state interests as they see them. In some cases this can be destabilizing. For example, in 1996 and 1998, Rwanda and Uganda used their security forces to invade the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] to address what they saw as their security interests. Similarly, Ethiopia and Kenya have assumed responsibility for AMISOM [the African Union Mission to Somalia] largely as a means of securing their own borders.

There have been relatively few international security threats in Africa in the last 50 years—or in the last 100 years, really, since the colonial occupation. But now, the African countries are becoming more vulnerable to external threats of various kinds, and I think that is leading the stronger countries to think more seriously about their own security and the security of their regions. This is going to change the dynamic on the continent as a whole in a good way, over the medium to long term. In the short term, these developments are not going to affect

the challenges facing CAR, DRC, and other troubled countries, but I think that, in the longer term, the region will finally move out of the post-colonial period and become self-sustaining, in terms of economic growth and development and security. The region is coming into its own.

COL MICHAEL MENSCH: We are talking about 54 different nation-states in Africa, so we are bound to generalize, but even where you see significant macro growth in the big picture, not every citizen is benefiting from that growth. Not to say there has not been some improvement, but still, the individual African's security is a human security challenge. I think there is still a long way to go toward ensuring that the gains at the national level reach the citizenry. The security versus development question is the classic chicken-and-egg question—I think you need both. To draw another comparison between state security and human security, individual security begins with the state. Even the wealthiest of the states run out of resources before they can ensure security at the human level. I think that if governments begin with individual security rather than with state or regime security, their people overall would be better off. But this would require that resources—both national resources and foreign aid—get utilized in the way in which they were intended to be utilized, and for the benefit of the people rather than being absorbed by various bureaucracies.

LAWSON: In terms of utilizing resources as intended, it is worth noting that Nigeria, for instance, is full of reformers, people who want to do the right thing, but it takes a whole bunch of people like that working together to address structural, organizational, and interest-based obstacles to better resource utilization. Nigeria has some way to go, but it also now has a president [Muhammadu Buhari] whom people are very excited about. Buhari has long been committed to fighting corruption as well as defeating Boko Haram. Those are the first steps towards development as far as many Nigerians are concerned, and I think they are right about that. Again, I am cautiously optimistic.

MENSCH: I think you have to look at the nature of the government. In Rwanda, for instance, the government has had a key role in ensuring the country's tidiness, orderliness, economic development, and the well-being of the people. If these things are better in Rwanda, however, they have come at a price. That price is that you're basically dealing with a police state: your life is going to be good as long as you don't make waves. If you make waves and resist the government, your life can be affected whenever and however the government wants. So there can be a trade-off for all of this good order and development that some people may not be interested in making.

TOMB: Terrorism is clearly a huge challenge facing Africa, with al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb [AQIM] attacking in the north and al Shabaab attacking in the east. Additionally, Boko Haram, which operates in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, was recently named the world's deadliest terrorist group, having killed over 6,600 people in 2014, which is more than ISIS killed that year.³ How serious is the threat of terrorism in Africa, and what can African governments and the international community do about it?

LAWSON: I would start with a definition of terrorism, because terrorism is simply a tactic. So let's say terrorism is the use or threat of violence against civilians in pursuit of a political goal.

“**BOKO HARAM WAS
RECENTLY NAMED THE
WORLD'S DEADLIEST
TERRORIST GROUP.**”

When you use violence against the government for a political goal, for example when al Shabaab uses terrorism to attack AMISOM or the Somali government, that is still an asymmetrical conflict. The goal is to defeat an enemy, not to persuade a government to change its policies. In contrast, the Shabaab attack on the Westgate mall in Nairobi in 2013 was classic terrorism: the goal was to persuade the Kenyan government to withdraw its forces from Somalia. These groups don't have the capacity to use other tactics, so they use this tactic regardless of the goal. Boko Haram is an insurgency. It has used terrorist tactics in the past and is returning to them now because it has been rolled back by government and neighboring armed forces. Early on, Boko Haram attacked police stations and robbed banks as a way of accumulating fighting resources, but it did not attack the civilian population as such. The organization evolved into a clear insurgency movement after its leader was killed in police custody—basically murdered by the Nigerian state.⁴ So it makes sense that it would become very deadly because it is now an army. The Nigerian Army is not very capable and in the past certainly did not feel the need to be prepared to take on this kind of threat. Boko Haram captured a lot of equipment from the Nigerian Army, which allowed it to become an expanding insurgency with basically the same level of capability as the army. As it has been rolled back, it has fallen back on classic terrorism, with attacks on the civilian population that are designed to delegitimize the Nigerian state.

The Army now has an insurgent force fighting them with their own weapons and with close to 10,000 fighters at one point. Boko Haram is a particular kind of insurgency, and it does kill more civilians. It is not going for a “hearts-and-minds” campaign. My general point is that Boko Haram is or wants to be associated with a transnational terrorist network, but in at least some of the periods of

Onlookers flee at the sound of gunfire at Westgate Mall, 23 September 2013.



its development, the tactics that Boko Haram used were much more those of an insurgency than these targeted or general terrorist attacks we see now.

Like Boko Haram, AQIM historically has not been a significant threat to Africa or even to Mali. Over the last 10 years or so, since the group has been in Mali, AQIM's fighters have sat out there in the desert hills. They have been primarily involved in kidnaping for ransom and then using that money to buy weapons, so they were stockpiling money and weapons but otherwise are just sitting there. AQIM is not a very big organization, and it is still largely an Algerian organization. In the same way that al Shabaab associated itself with al Qaeda when Shabaab was weak and falling apart, so AQIM's predecessor, the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, did this as a way of trying to reinvigorate itself. [AQIM leader Mokhtar] Belmokhtar was a cigarette smuggler. Moving things across borders is what keeps economies going out there in the desert. In my viewpoint, there is nothing particularly unusual or threatening about smuggling economies that have been active for decades.

If you look at the population distribution of Mali, 90 percent of the population lives in the southern third of the country. The Mali government has never lost control over this area. The remaining 10 percent of the population lives in the other two-thirds of Mali, and some 80 to 90 percent of those people live in a few towns. So most of Mali is effectively empty. With regard to AQIM sitting out there in the desert, the Malian government had said, essentially, "Those of you who have an issue or a problem with AQIM, go ahead and try to deal with it because we have issues of our own and AQIM is not really doing anything to us." The government was right about that. Similarly, ethnic Tuareg rebellions are more or less perennial: they keep coming back about every 10 years. I think it's important to remember that before the most recent Tuareg attack in Mali [beginning in January 2012], the conventional wisdom was that Mali was dealing with them in exactly the right way. There was a tendency among observers to criticize Niger for being so beefy and militaristic, whereas Mali was praised for decentralizing and power-sharing and doing all kinds of nice stuff—promoting autonomy in the region. Suddenly, with northern Mali falling to the MNLA [National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad] and Ansare Dine [which provided the personal and organizational links between AQIM and MNLA] in 2012, this policy looks like a mistake.

But this is because AQIM is sitting there on a bunch of money and weapons, and then the Libyan state collapses. Who anticipated that? When Qaddafi fell, armed Malians who had been working in the Libyan presidential guard or were otherwise supported by Qaddafi came back to Mali with equipment and armaments that they would never, under any other circumstances, have had. The governments of both Niger and Mali were saying to NATO: "Please don't intervene in Libya, we don't need to hurry this rebellion on. Our countries are going to absorb the cost if you do." And they did. So I don't know how much of a threat AQIM itself really is. It is there, and it was able to provide the extra funding and weaponry that facilitated Ansare Dine's success, so in that particular context, it was a significant threat. Whether it can expand and threaten other countries remains to be seen. In recent months, AQIM has begun to carry out classic terror attacks in West Africa on the heels of the more spectacular ISIS attacks in Europe, perhaps to remind us that al Qaeda still exists. In the long run, these terrorist threats might be a good thing, if the region's governments feel sufficiently threatened to begin taking security more seriously.

“ IF YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT, YOU DON'T WANT THE ARMY TO BE TOO CAPABLE. ”

In most post-colonial African countries, the army has been the biggest threat to any sitting president. So if you're the president, rationality tells you that you don't want the army to be too professional, too capable. Instead, it becomes an institution for distributing patronage. So it's not surprising that the Malian army collapsed in 2012 in the face of the Tuareg separatist-Islamist insurgency, and it's not surprising that the Nigerian Army had a really hard time dealing with Boko Haram. But I think the level of threat indicates not so much the strength of those threatening organizations but rather the weakness of the state military institutions. If the governments and the leaders of those institutions respond to these threats by increasing their own capabilities, then I think it will not be that difficult for them to roll the insurgents back. In the short term, it's hard to predict, however, whether they will do so or the extent to which they will do so. I would expect that not much will be done in Mali because their problem has been solved for them. France and the UN are taking care of the insurgency, so the incentives for Mali's government and military to get serious about security may be lower than for Nigeria. In any case, they are never going to be able to defend a big piece of virtually uninhabited desert out there.



Nigeria, in contrast, needs to, and actually can, control all of its own territory. Nigeria is not a desert; it is a country of 140 million people. The little corner of the country where Boko Haram operates is more sparsely populated, but the country as a whole is relatively densely populated. I think that with the correct sort of stimulus, the Nigerian government and armed forces should be able to make the kinds of changes they need to become more effective.

On the other side of the continent, al Shabaab is essentially contained. The international naval presence off the coast has mostly eliminated the piracy threat. Kenya and Ethiopia are now sealing off their borders with Somalia. Across the center of the country you have what the BBC calls “pro-government militias” supported by Ethiopia, which are basically a way for Ethiopia to operate through Somali proxies. Somalia’s neighbors have mostly sealed in the al Shabaab threat.

Kenya is still threatened by Shabaab because Shabaab recruits quite effectively in Kenya, and it will continue to be an actual terrorist threat there. In the longer term, I think this could actually be a good thing, because it is creating a sense of cohesion in Kenya. The fight against al Shabaab can be divisive on religious grounds of course, but it’s really challenging the Kenyan government and security forces to be more effective in their intelligence, especially internally.

The Kenyan media are among the best in the region. They report on what’s going on, and civil society has a chance to think about this situation. Asking the question, “What is this threat to us as Kenyans?” is actually useful in creating a cohesive national identity in the long run. If you are a target, if you are in the Westgate mall shopping when Shabaab shows up, you don’t care about the long run.⁵ But the government can use such threats to help build better state-society relations and stronger security institutions.

MENSCH: The short-term answer to your specific question—how serious is the threat of terrorism for Africa—depends on *where* you are in Africa and *who* you are in Africa. There is no guarantee that your country is not going to be targeted, if for no other reason than because the bad guys *can* attack you. I would imagine that every African state is paying more attention now and considers terrorism a threat to its people, if not to the state itself. So I think the awareness is high and terrorism is seen as a serious threat by most governments in Africa.

What can African governments do about it? In principle, this is the same everywhere: first of all, they need to develop good sources of information, a good intelligence network. Here is where a more authoritarian government may have an advantage if it has a well-developed internal and external intelligence apparatus—especially internal. This kind of government may have better access to information about what’s going on in the far-flung areas of the country as well as in the capital. But once you collect information, you have to know what you want to do with it, which brings in another whole layer of intelligence processing: translating information into intelligence that leaders can use for policy and decision-making purposes. Beyond the analysis, you then have to be able to do something about it. We—the international community—are speaking with one voice now: We want to eliminate the threat on the ground

“NIGERIA NEEDS TO, AND ACTUALLY CAN, CONTROL ALL OF ITS OWN TERRITORY.”

and in the air. We want to kill these people before they kill us. We want to put them out of business.

That's one side of it, but then, as if that's not difficult enough, the more problematic side is that for every one of these terrorists—or criminals, or whatever you want to call them—that we kill, we potentially create an extended family of more martyrs who are willing to take up the call, however illogical it may seem to us. Since the creation of the state of Israel, we have had an angry, even desperate population of Arabs who feel that they have been systemically disenfranchised in this process. This frustration has finally boiled over to the point that we are at today. We can argue the morality or the legality of deciding that we, the United States or the international community, can take unilateral actions anywhere in the world to fight the terrorists or to preclude a terrorist attack, but that doesn't address the bigger picture. I think that whether it's terrorism or economic development or security cooperation in general, we need to ask questions rather than provide solutions. We want to let the Africans lead the process in their country or sub-region. The initiative needs to come from our "client," the people and government we are trying to help. My feeling is that we need to be very careful about how we approach this situation with African countries. We can do certain things for them, but there are some things we can't do—such as find [Lord's Resistance Army leader] Joseph Kony—or are not willing to do—such as put US conventional forces into the fight against Boko Haram. The United States' relationship with any African country is not going to be the same as that country's relationship with a former colonial power like France, Belgium, or Great Britain. It's going to be very difficult for the United States to play more than a support role in fighting terrorism in Africa.

Finally, we all need to address the ideological, economic, and social causes of terrorism.

LAWSON: It is important to put terrorism in the context of other threats. In the United States, we have the luxury of having terrorism be perhaps our most significant security threat. African countries do not have that luxury; they have a lot of other threats that are more important. We define security broadly to include human security. In the same time period when several hundred people were

killed by terrorist attacks in Mali and two-thirds of the country came under the insurgents' control, do you know how many African kids died of malaria? Hundreds of thousands.

Even in terms of violent security threats, it seems to me that the biggest threat of violence in the modal African country comes from unemployment. Unemployed people may be recruited to terrorism, but they may be recruited to other forms of violence, too, because they have nothing to do. They are frustrated, so the salary it takes to recruit them into an organization, regardless of what the organization stands for, is relatively low. The satisfaction they get from feeling as if they are a part of something is substantial, it seems to me, because they don't get that satisfaction out of anything else. So even to the extent that governments see terrorism as a serious threat, they still need to be investing primarily in health and education and economic development.

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STRUCTURAL
UNEMPLOYMENT IS
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THE CENTURY.
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TOMB: That's a perfect segue into the next question. Observers often note a correlation between underdevelopment, civil conflict, failing states, and acts of terrorism. Do you see development as an effective and legitimate means for countering terrorism? If these young people you are talking about have a job, if they feel like they are included in their community and their society, will that prevent them from turning to terrorism?

LAWSON: In the long run, development absolutely is the answer. In the short run, there is no way to employ all of those people who need jobs. But addressing structural unemployment is not even a generational problem, it's a problem for the century. The dilemma is how to address root causes, which are clearly economic. So you have to start now, and as far as I am concerned, you have to make development your number one priority. But even if you do that, it doesn't mean that you're going to stop the threat of terrorism in your lifetime, and certainly not in the next election cycle or even in the next generation. Economic development is the long-term solution, but while you are pursuing a long-term solution, you absolutely need shorter-term strategies and tactics to manage what you can't resolve.





MENSCH: Development and counterterrorism need to be done hand in hand. But I also think that the question of security is too often seen as involving only the state. As we have said, security now includes so many things: economic, social, and health issues as well as defense-related issues. Depending on how pressing the security issues are for a state, they can affect the government's ability to focus on development, if indeed security is not already consuming all of the state's resources. So how can we do these two things, security and development, at the same time? Obviously we cannot solve this in the short term, as Letitia said.

But we need to do something to make as many people as possible feel secure in their own homes. In my experience, Africans don't expect a lot from their governments because they haven't gotten a lot from their governments. They would be happy if they were just left alone to farm, to educate, clothe, and feed their children. They vote people into office—there is democracy. The developed countries have jammed it down everybody's throat, for good reason and with good intentions in most cases. But as someone said, you can't eat democracy. The disinterest people have in their own governments contributes to a lack of security and a lack of government accountability at all levels, and this indifference also affects the development of communities from the village level up through the state level. People are disinterested because their interest has never been appreciated, whether at the ballot box or within the governments itself. Interestingly enough, I think one of the biggest shifts in Africa in the last 20 years has been the emergence of civil society as a recognized player in the governance process—accepted and recognized, albeit with some caution—by states and the international community. Civil societies have done a reasonably credible job of linking the people at all levels to their government at all levels. This may be a bright spot, but it is still overshadowed by the unequal distribution of wealth and lack of security at all levels, including the state. If the state is feeling threatened, that's all officials are going to think about.

TOMB: In your opinion, is corruption a contributor to terrorism and insecurity, or is that taking it too far? What role does corruption play?

MENSCH: Corruption gets in the way of a lot of things, but it mainly drains resources from the state. It lowers people's expectations of what they can do for themselves and what their government will do for them. I also think that sometimes we make too much out of corruption. When I and other instructors from the Center for Civil-Military Relations have worked in Africa over the last 15 or 16 years, facilitating programs throughout the continent, we don't ever bring up the "C" word. This doesn't mean corruption doesn't get talked about, because our participants will generally bring it up, but I think corruption as we Americans understand it is one thing, while the Africans see it as another thing. It is how "Africa Works."⁶ It's an ingrained process that has to do with the system of clientele-ism that has developed over the years. It's not as black-and-white an issue as we [non-Africans] would often like to portray it. Corruption certainly does drain resources, and it really becomes a problem when the state runs out of the resources it needs to fulfill its role as the patron and take care of its responsibilities to its clients. When those in power run out of their own money to do this, they use the state's money, and when the state runs out of money, then other issues such as political instability, public dissatisfaction, civil disobedience, and

“THERE IS DEMOCRACY.
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public unrest can arise and pose a threat to security. If we could create jobs for some of these folks, then economic development would be part of an answer to the problem of corruption. Executive and legislative impunity in Africa is also a factor in this discussion. It's difficult to hold people accountable.

LAWSON: In Nigeria, as an example, it seems there is a very direct correlation between corruption and terrorism and counterterrorism. If you look at the ideology of Boko Haram, especially in its early days, one of the things that has motivated the group is the lack of justice in Nigeria. Even their name, which they didn't choose, reflects this. The community started calling them *boko haram* as a way of making fun of them, actually. *Boko* is the [Hausa] word for book, which is associated with Western education, and *haram* means forbidden. Leaders of Boko Haram associate Western education with access to elite positions. In their view, this leads to systemic inequality: some people become very well off through corruption, while others have nothing. So in Nigeria in particular, the inequality and injustice that flow from corruption are actually key elements of the terrorists' ideology.

But I think it's also important to recognize that corruption is not limited to the state, and within the state apparatus, it is not centralized. That means it's difficult for the state to reform itself because corruption is so pervasive. Even lower-level employees have not really bought into this effort to reform and address these issues at all levels. I think it's a really complicated issue to deal with, which is the main reason why we don't bring it up in our courses. If you poll Africans, they say corruption is their biggest problem. But when individuals are involved in reciprocal arrangements, it doesn't seem so much like corruption to them; it seems more like corruption when somebody else is involved. Again, this is driven by the fact that there are not enough resources for anything. How to you distribute scarce resources? They tend to get distributed through patronage networks, so if you are outside of the network, obviously the whole thing looks illegitimate. But what is the alternative? How else do governments hold their countries together in this context of resource scarcity and institutional weakness?

One of the biggest obstacles for the Nigerian government and the Nigerian security forces in dealing with Boko Haram is that people don't trust the government or security forces any more than they trust Boko Haram. This is also a problem of corruption, as is the inadequacy of the security forces' equipment. The ongoing trials of high-level officials for corruption related to the theft of resources intended for the counterinsurgency campaign are evidence of this problem. I think this is another thing that can eventually bring benefit: when the threat gets high enough that people take it seriously, maybe we can start to work on resolving some of those issues. But it's a very long-term agenda, and it's very directly related to economic development. There is no country in the world that has reduced patronage significantly before developing a capitalist economy. That's just the reality, because resources are scarce and there is no middle class. So I think you have to work on everything at the same time, to an extent sufficient to rally the population and gain their confidence. If even a little improvement in the effectiveness of counterterrorism or counterinsurgency buys you some popular support, you can build on that by encouraging people to trust more in

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”





government and to help the government. Counterterrorism is not a government activity. Everybody has to be engaged, because the security services have to be able to get intelligence from the people.

MENSCH: Corruption can divert funds that were intended for development to other purposes, into people's pockets or wherever. Because donors recognize that, there has been a shift from direct budgetary assistance to governments to routing funds through the NGO community and civil society organizations. That was heralded as a positive development that would enable donors to track and get better use from and accountability for the donated funds. But just as logic would tell you, we now see that some civil society organizations have become part of the problem as well as part of the solution. Such organizations compete for resources, especially at the national or local level. The fact that each time we try to address this with development assistance the basic economic situation does not change should tell us something. Needy people will find a way to access the resources, and patronage has implications for both the people who have and the people who do not have. Clearly, corruption is going to be with us for a while. A few countries have tried to develop effective anticorruption organizations and plans. If they are really effective, they run into problems, not just with government, as Letitia said, but with other organizations, the business community, contractors, and so on. Until the basics of the economy and governance improve, I think this is just going to be a fact of life, which does not mean that we should not try to fight against the problem.

TOMB: What is the state of defense institutions in African countries? Is the US Congress right to focus on strengthening management and oversight of African armed forces, alongside more traditional train-and-equip programs?

MENSCH: Yes, I think we are right to focus on management of the force, national security planning, institutional development, defense ministry capacity, professionalism, and so on. We have also identified some weaknesses in our train-and-equip methodology in Africa in the last five or 10 years. Building the defense institution within a country is an important step, but you can't wait to train and equip the armed forces while you are building the defense institutions; you have to be able to do them both simultaneously, which is not necessarily easy. But I question the US approach. We go to the Liberian defense minister's office, for example, and tell him, "Oh, hi, we're from the United States government, and we're here to help you clean up your ministry." This is not a good approach to take with almost any of these governments. We develop these ideas about how we need to do this or that in Africa, without consulting our African partners. We don't ask, "Mr. Minister, how can we help you strengthen your efficiency, your productivity, the professionalism of your ministry? How can we help you exercise objective control over your armed forces? What are your priorities?" We don't do that. We come in with an idea and say, "Here is our idea. Do it." Then we wonder why the ministries drag their feet in implementation. They don't want to say no to a gift horse, but they clearly don't have their heart in some of these initiatives because they are not their initiatives, they are ours. I think that's an inherent problem with the approach that we take. For example, a worthwhile but ambitious effort to help the DRC prepare for local and presidential elections in 2016 was canceled by the host government when it realized that participants

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IF ANTICORRUPTION
PLANS ARE REALLY
EFFECTIVE, THEY RUN
INTO PROBLEMS.”

were raising issues that the central government did not want raised. Intelligence officials were sent to stop the seminars that were already in progress, and the US facilitators were told to leave the country. The government of the DRC had only reluctantly and vaguely approved this program—after it had already begun—under pressure from the US government. Unless the host governments want US assistance at least as much the United States wants to provide it, neither the host government's nor the US government's interests will be served.

LAWSON: We absolutely have to follow. There is no way we can lead. So if we identify a country in which the government is seriously interested in institution building, I think we can be of assistance. I would add that there actually always is civilian oversight of the military in Africa; often there is too much, not too little. The problem is that it is not formally institutionalized. These governments work through personal networks, so institutions are going to be personalized. When we show up to say, “We are here to help you build institutional capacity,” it's not just that they are not paying attention. They actually don't want it, because the way they control their security forces is through personal networks.

This is an important thing to emphasize. In countries where we perceive a direct threat to our interests and need partners to address it, we don't push our agendas. Are we

running out to Ethiopia, for example, to say we are there to help them build their democratic institutions? I don't think so. We let them work the way they want to because that works for us. In places like Liberia, by contrast, we show up to say, “We are here to help you build an institution!” because there aren't any real threats to US interests in Liberia. When we don't have real threats, we fall back on institution building and democratization and all of these lofty sorts of goals that we set aside when we do have real security interests. We have to think about these questions from the perspective of African governments. Controlling the military is always serious for them. There is evidence that Nigeria is seriously interested in institutionalizing civilian control because of the recognition that the security forces need to be more effective than they are. But again, I think we can help only where a government has decided that this is a priority for them.

TOMB: Thank you both. ♦

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER

Nicholas Tomb is the program manager for the Africa Program at the Center for Civil-Military Relations.

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NOTES

- 1 The Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP) aims to collect and archive knowledge on strategy, operations, and tactics used by military and other security personnel from around the world in the twenty-first-century fight against global terrorism. Collectively, the individual interviews that CTAP conducts will create an oral history archive of knowledge and experience in counterterrorism for the benefit of the CT community now and in the future.
- 2 This interview was edited for length and clarity. Every effort was made to ensure that the meaning and intention of the participants were not altered in any way. The ideas and opinions of all participants are theirs alone and do not represent the official positions of the US Naval Postgraduate School, the US Department of Defense, the US government, or any other official entity.
- 3 Dionne Searcey and Marc Santora, “Boko Haram Ranked ahead of ISIS for Deadliest Terror Group,” *New York Times*, 18 November 2015: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/19/world/africa/boko-haram-ranked-ahead-of-isis-for-deadliest-terror-group.html>
- 4 *Editor's note:* For more about Boko Haram's beginnings, see Muhammad Feyyaz, “Understanding the Intensity of Boko Haram's Terrorism,” *CTX* 5, no. 1 (February 2015): <https://globalecco.org/343>
- 5 On 21 September 2013, gunmen besieged Nairobi's upscale Westgate shopping mall. Sixty-seven people were killed, and more than 175 were injured in the course of a three-day standoff with Kenyan security forces. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility. See Daniel Howden, “Terror in Nairobi: The Full Story Behind al Shabaab's Mall Attack,” *Guardian*, 4 October 2013: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/04/westgate-mall-attacks-kenya?view=mobile>
- 6 This is a reference to the book *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999).

ETHICS AND INSIGHTS

*George Lober,
US Naval Postgraduate School*

WHenever I have attempted to teach the concept of principled ethics in a class or at a briefing over the past eight years, I have asked those present to consider whether they hold any principle to be so fundamental to who they are that they are willing to “go to the mat” over it—to uphold it, even in the face of anguish and hardship for themselves or someone else. And almost every time I’ve asked this question, the reaction from the majority of those present has been “No.”

Before we go further, keep in mind two things: First, I typically ask this question of young, seasoned, professionally dedicated, often combat-tested individuals from law enforcement and the military, whose core task is to defeat the evils of terrorism. These are people who have taken at least one oath, and often more, to protect and defend a country, a constitution, a citizenry. But invariably, the overwhelming majority of them regard personal ethics as a shifting calculus, a product of an ever-present consequential calculation. And second, although I’m disappointed at the tally, I’m honestly no longer surprised.

I recognize that the majority of the people sitting before me when I ask this question may never have considered the issue of principled ethics. It’s likely that their ethics training up until now has been based on an amalgam of vague precepts: don’t screw up, do what’s right, don’t embarrass the organization. And it’s equally likely that for them a simple utilitarian calculation—find the resolution that provides the greatest benefit to those involved (however “those involved” is defined)—has served them extremely well. I understand that. But I also think of Stuart Herrington.

The story of Captain Herrington is one of many stories depicted in the 2014 documentary film, *Last Days in Vietnam*.¹ Herrington was an American intelligence officer stationed at the US Embassy in Saigon in April 1975, during the final weeks of the Vietnam War. Although the invading North Vietnamese forces were driving south toward Saigon and the South Vietnamese army had already begun to collapse under the weight of the North’s advance, US Ambassador Graham Martin refused to authorize a plan for the systematic evacuation of the approximately 5,000 American personnel who remained in-country. Many of those personnel were involved with, or married to, South Vietnamese nationals, and some had families in Saigon. Martin similarly refused to authorize even the development of any plan to remove those South Vietnamese military leaders, officials, and locals who, once the Northern forces arrived, would be at high risk of execution because of their cooperation with the Americans.

Herrington fully grasped the imminent danger to those South Vietnamese officials and others with whom he had directly worked. In clear defiance of the approved American embassy evacuation plan, which forbid the evacuation of South Vietnamese nationals, and also in direct violation of Vietnamese law, which specifically stated that South Vietnamese military officials were not to be

**DON'T SCREW
UP, DO WHAT'S
RIGHT, DON'T
EMBARRASS THE
ORGANIZATION.**

evacuated, Herrington and other American servicemen began to organize “black operations” to smuggle high-risk South Vietnamese military friends, officials, and associates out of the country through unauthorized airlifts on empty cargo planes. According to former CIA analyst Frank Snepp, who was stationed in Saigon at the time, the airlifts were “makeshift, ‘underground railway’ evacuations using outgoing cargo aircraft that would be totally below the radar of the ambassador.”² Herrington chose to act because the South Vietnamese officials and military officers whom he evacuated were, realistically speaking, “dead men walking.” Yet, had these unauthorized evacuations ever been detected, he and the others who were involved would have been “run out of country, end of career!” Herrington himself explains his decision in the film, “But sometimes there’s an issue not of legal or illegal but of right or wrong.” In other words, Herrington was driven by an ethical principle. In defiance of both a written directive that specifically forbade the evacuations and the peril to his career, he chose to save the lives of his South Vietnamese military colleagues and their families.

Do I think Stuart Herrington acted ethically in ignoring both the clear intentions of the ambassador and the written directive? Yes, I do—an answer that should come as no surprise to regular readers of my columns. In recent issues of *CTX*, I wrote about individuals such as Belgian Army Captain Luc Lemaire and Swiss border officer Paul Grüniger, who faced similar circumstances.³ The documentary *Last Days in Vietnam* also highlights other American servicemen



and diplomats who made similar decisions to save South Vietnamese nationals, but what makes the case of Stuart Herrington so compelling for me is that he was driven by the principle to do right by those who had stood beside him and put their own lives on the line in the mutual struggle to preserve South Vietnam. Herrington clearly knew the risks he was taking, but he also knew he had both the opportunity and the means to save those directly in his sphere of influence from imminent execution. Given that opportunity and those means, he chose to act on his principles.

What's in a Principle?

The case of Stuart Herrington nevertheless raises two concerns about the dangers of acting on a principle. The first concern is that it's not enough simply to possess a principle. Anyone can have a principle: even the villainous Joker and Penguin characters from the Batman comic books possess principles, albeit profoundly duplicitous, self-serving ones.⁴ And merely calling a favorite concept or belief a principle doesn't automatically ensure that it is founded on a bedrock of morals or ethics. In that regard, as one measure of whether a principle is ethically justifiable, I recommend the first part of Emmanuel Kant's categorical imperative, in which he suggests that one's actions—presumably as an extension of one's will—should always be fit to serve as a maxim or guide for others.⁵ In



other words, I should act in a way that I believe would serve as an example of right behavior for everyone else in the world.

Kant can be perceived to be unyielding in this dictum, as with, for example, his insistence on never telling a lie regardless of the circumstances. And the burden of always acting as a model for future decision makers can be ponderous, to say the least. But the notion of basing a principle on an action you'd want everyone else to emulate in their own lives seems sound to me, and I suspect that Herrington and many of the other Americans in Saigon at the time felt the same way.

Still another time-tested guidepost for the ethical soundness of a principle may be Rushworth Kidder's care-based resolution principle, which he acknowledges is nothing more than the Golden Rule (do to others as you would have them do to you), a guide that "not only sets limits on our actions, but encourages us to promote the interests of others."⁶ Again, I think Captain Herrington would agree, especially as he imagined himself in the shoes of those South Vietnamese servicemen and their families, facing the impending arrival of the North Vietnamese forces. And while Kidder acknowledges that the Golden Rule tends to be dismissed by both weighty earlier philosophers such as Kant and contemporary ones such as Sissela Bok,⁷ it appears in some form as a moral precept of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and the rest of the major religions.⁸ In that light, the Golden Rule is probably not a bad guidepost by which to measure an ethical principle.



**HE REMEMBERS
LOOKING DOWN AT
THOSE 420 PEOPLE
WAITING QUIETLY
ON THE GROUNDS
WHERE HE LEFT THEM.**



grounds signifies that they are already within the safety and protection of the United States. Hours later, however, after 680 of the 1,100 assembled Vietnamese nationals have been evacuated, an order from US President Gerald Ford ends the airlifts, and Herrington is tasked with keeping the remaining 420 South Vietnamese "warm"—that is, to mollify and deceive them into staying calm so that he and the rest of the embassy staff can exit to the roof and be airlifted on the final flight out of the city. Or to put it another way, Stuart Herrington, who earlier in the month risked his career to airlift his South Vietnamese colleagues and their families to safety and who hours earlier had promised the remaining nationals that they would be protected and evacuated as well, is now ordered to lie to those same people so that they will remain passive while being abandoned. And Herrington does his job.

He walks over to the remaining 420 South Vietnamese and tells them a "big helicopter is about to come." Then after waiting a moment, he excuses himself, walks a circuitous route back into the embassy, and climbs to the roof. In a later interview, Herrington confesses that the entire situation, including the way he broke his personal promise to those waiting outside, "really, really was wrong," and he admits that he considered for a moment remaining at the embassy until his promise was fulfilled. Still, he boarded the helicopter and remembers looking down through the open door at those 420 people waiting quietly on the grounds where he left them. "I felt absolutely awful," he confides. "It was so severe and deep a betrayal." And by that he means, I assume, not only a betrayal of the people below, but of himself.

The Cost of Turning Away

The case of Captain Herrington illustrates a second concern for me, as well: ethical principles can not only be tough to cling to in times that test character, but they can also be scarring to abandon.

The end of *Last Days in Vietnam* depicts the final hours of the American embassy in Saigon, 29–30 April 1975, as approximately 1,100 South Vietnamese men, women, and children wait in darkness inside the embassy grounds, hoping to be airlifted to safety before the North Vietnamese forces reach them.⁹ Herrington approaches the crowd and promises them that they will all be safely evacuated. He further assures them that being on the embassy

I've seen this film several times, and I have always inferred that Herrington struggled with the fact that he deliberately broke his promise to those people and abandoned them to whatever fate they would encounter under the North Vietnamese. I suspect in his world—of military discipline and the military code of honor—one does not readily abandon either a principle or a promise made when there are human lives potentially on the line, and I fully believe that for him the reconciliation of that broken promise and its consequences has not come easily.

Having said that, when I consider his two decisions—first to organize "black ops" to evacuate South Vietnamese colleagues at the risk of his military career, and second to lie and abandon other South Vietnamese when the peril

was imminent—it occurs to me that the circumstances surrounding the two decisions were significantly different. In early April 1975, Herrington had the three necessary conditions of time, opportunity, and means by which to act upon his principle to help protect those individuals who had worked closely with him in a common cause. In the final hours of the embassy evacuation, he had none of those conditions to call upon. At the moment of his promise to the 1,100 people on the embassy grounds that they would all be airlifted to safety, there is no reason to doubt that Herrington believed that the time, opportunity, and means to fulfill that promise still held, just as they had up until then. But in the intervening hours between his promise and the eventual direction by his superior to go downstairs and make the remaining 420 “warm,” decision makers far removed from the reality of the embassy grounds that night canceled all three of the necessary conditions for Herrington’s promise to remain viable. He was thus left with few choices other than to betray those to whom he had promised safety and protection only hours earlier.

To his credit, Herrington did consider refusing to leave until the remaining 420 South Vietnamese were evacuated as he had promised. But he also realized that, by that time, it was too late to get anyone else out. His superiors had made the decision to end the airlift. Furthermore, there was the danger that if he told the crowd the truth, they were likely to panic and delay his own departure, and risk allowing the North Vietnamese troops to start targeting the evacuation helicopters.¹⁰

In today’s parlance, it’s possible that Stuart Herrington suffered a “moral injury”—what Dr. Bill Nash, a leading authority on the subject, would describe as the ancient idea “that people can be damaged in the cores of their personhood by life experiences that violently contradict deeply held, and deeply necessary, beliefs about themselves and the world.”¹¹ Such is the price we may pay for possessing strong ethical principles and encountering experiences that challenge and occasionally overwhelm our ability to honor them.

Despite his decision that day in 1975, I admire what Herrington and his fellow “black-ops” conspirators did to help those whom they could help. I admire the fact that he acted on an ethical principle. I also admire the fact that almost 40 years later, he is still grappling with the memory of his actions on the embassy grounds that night and is attempting to reconcile them with those “deeply held, and deeply necessary, beliefs” about himself and the world. I believe, simply, that true ethical principles rooted in sound, morally justifiable soil are important. I further believe that individuals who possess such principles and have had to pay the price for them offer the rest of us a possible model for how we ourselves should act when we are put to the test. ♦

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George Lober teaches ethics at the US Naval Postgraduate School.

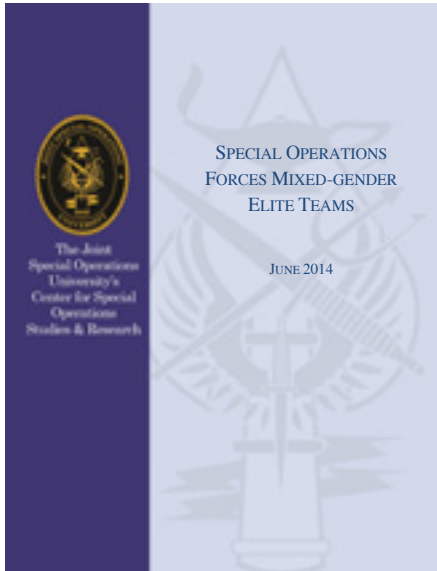
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NOTES

- 1 *Last Days in Vietnam* was directed and produced by Rory Kennedy for American Experience Films/PBS. See “Last Days in Vietnam,” 2014: <http://lastdaysinvietnam.com>
- 2 The quotes and information in this paragraph are from *Last Days in Vietnam*.
- 3 See George Lober, “Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility, Part 1: To Tool or Not to Tool,” *CTX* 5, no. 2 (May 2015): <https://globalecco.org/ethics-and-insights-making-decisions-taking-ethical-responsibility-part-1-to-tool-or-not-to-tool>; George Lober, “Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility, Part 2: Recalibrating the Job, Reconsidering the Tool,” *CTX* 5, no. 3 (August 2015): <https://globalecco.org/making-decisions-taking-ethical-responsibility-part-2-recalibrating-the-job-reconsidering-the-tool>
- 4 “Joker,” DC Comics, n.d.: <http://www.dccomics.com/characters/joker>; “Penguin,” DC Comics, n.d.: <http://www.dccomics.com/characters/penguin>
- 5 Immanuel Kant, “Duty and Reason as the Ultimate Principle,” in *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, ed. John Cottingham (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 386–87.
- 6 Rushworth M. Kidder, *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), Kindle edition, 158.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., 157.
- 9 The following description of events at the US embassy in Saigon is from *Last Days in Vietnam*.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Bill Nash, “Introduction,” in *God Is Not Here* by Bill Russell Edmonds (New York: Pegasus Books, 2015), 14.

JSOU PUBLICATIONS

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Special Operations Forces Mixed-Gender Elite Teams by William Knarr, Jessica Glicken Turnley, Dona J. Stewart, Rich Rubright, and Jason Quirin

On 24 January 2013, the US secretary of defense (SecDef) rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DCAR), which excluded women from assignment to units and positions whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground. In doing so, the SecDef directed the opening of all occupational specialties, positions, and units to women; the validation of gender-neutral standards for those positions; and the establishment of milestones for implementation. In a March 2013 memorandum, the Commander USSOCOM directed several initiatives as a result of the SecDef's DCAR rescission. While other studies examined individual performance and standards, the JSOU Center for Special Operations Studies and Research examined the effects of these changes on team dynamics. The challenge for this study was to determine whether changing the gender component of special operations forces elite teams from single-gender (masculine) to mixed-gender would affect team dynamics in a way that would compromise the ability of the team to meet a mission objective.



Improving the Sustainment of SOF Distributed Operations in Access-Denied Environments by Robert Haddick

In this monograph, Robert Haddick examines a variety of emerging technologies and techniques that could improve the sustainment and effectiveness of distributed SOF operations, especially in access-denied environments. He begins by presenting a challenging yet plausible notional unconventional warfare campaign scenario. He describes how current SOF planners would attempt to cope with this scenario under current doctrine and sustainment capabilities, and explores current and emerging technologies that could provide new options and capabilities. Finally, he evaluates new technologies that promise to reduce logistic demand for distributed SOF operations. Haddick proposes research and development projects that would provide SOF with capabilities that improve their capacity to execute clandestine UW campaigns in denied areas. This monograph helps close the gap between current conditions and what will be necessary in an access-denied future.



SOF Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime edited by William Mendel and Peter McCabe

In April 2015, military and civilian personnel from Canada, Mexico, and the United States came together at Colorado Springs, Colorado, for a symposium hosted by US Special Operations Command-North and facilitated by Joint Special Operations University and Canadian Special Operations Forces Command. Their task was to examine the role of SOF in combating transnational organized crime (TOC). The panelists and plenary participants considered a wide range of issues related to the TOC threat. After the symposium concluded, panelists and speakers synthesized the results of their research and panel discussions into articles for publication. Those articles are found in the chapters of this proceedings report. The implication for SOF is that they must continue to train to meet the strategic challenges ahead. This will require forward-deployed units that are engaged with their counterparts in host countries because TOC is both a threat to, and a result of, weak, emerging democratic governments. These governments can benefit from engagement. Readiness to conduct all SOF core activities will remain a priority.



Rethinking Special Operations Leadership: Process, Persuasion, Pre-existing, and Personality by Paul S. Lieber

In this paper, Dr. Lieber describes leadership characteristics through the lens of special operations. By exploring the importance of process, persuasion, pre-existing schemata, and personality nuances on special operations leadership training and execution, along with additional traits or characteristics necessary for success, Dr. Lieber looks beyond the traditional definitions of military leadership. The first section explores process and adaptation to innovation. Organizations must innovate, but it is the leader's responsibility to make certain that innovation is both appropriate and matched to an established goal. The next section studies the leader's power of persuasion and the ability to nuance messaging and influence desirable opinions and consensus building. The third part explores pre-existing schemata and provides recommendations to avoid cognitive dissonance. In the final section, Dr. Lieber takes a look at how personality differences can affect and enhance teams that are composed of diverse personality types. Dr. Lieber is an award-winning scholar and practitioner in the field of global strategic communication. Currently a resident senior fellow at JSOU, he previously served as the command writer for two USSOCOM commanders.



The War Within: A Look Inside al-Qaeda's Undoing by Jarret Brachman

In this monograph, Dr. Brachman delves into al Qaeda's crumbling global movement and its internal struggles, including its attempts to remain relevant in the shadow of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Brachman cites various internal writings of al Qaeda's past and present leaders, thinkers, and supporters. It becomes clear that this once dominant terrorist organization has changed in the post-bin Laden era, becoming fractured and taking a backseat to ISIL. Brachman analyzes letters, blog posts, and social media comments from various ranks within al Qaeda that show the discontent, frustration, and confusion the once prominent terrorist organization has faced in recent years. Although struggling, al Qaeda remains a serious threat and maintains a global footprint. But as ISIL gains more publicity, al Qaeda has more trouble competing for followers, funding, and attention. This monograph explores al Qaeda's recent efforts to make sense of itself.

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